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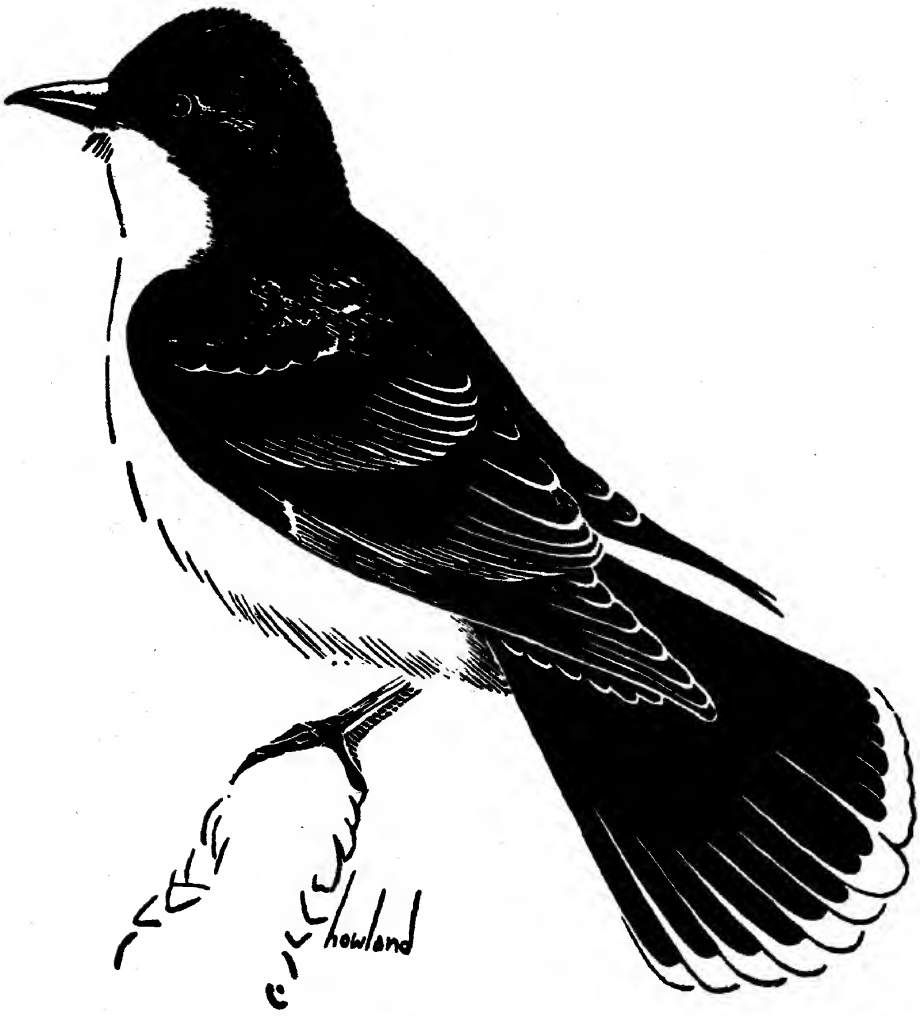

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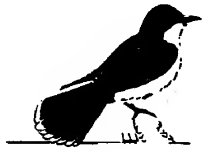

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CONTENTS

Black Brant in New York State A . Wilson & A. Guthrie.....98

View From Mt. Peter Judith Cinquina.....107

Report of The New York State Avian Records Committee for 1996.....114

Obituary—Geoffrey Carleton Emanuel Levine.....122

A Presumed Hybrid Warbler in Brooklyn's Prospect Park:
Common Yellowthroat x Mourning Warbler A. Vallely & T. Fiore.....123

Polygynous Mating in Eastern Phoebe Mark Gretch.....126

Letter to the Editor (re NYSARC).....129

Highlights of the Winter Season (1998-1999) Willie D'Anna.....132

Reporting Deadlines & Map of Reporting Regions.....136-137

Regional Reports.....138-184

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BLACK BRANT IN NEW YORK STATE

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ABSTRACT

Black Brant is a rare winter visitor to New York State with seven records this century. During the winter of 1997/98, three Black Brant wintered with a flock of Atlantic Brant in the vicinity of Riis Park in Queens. The occurrence of this many individuals at one location is unprecedented, both in New York State and the entire eastern seaboard of North America. In 1983, based primarily on reports of extensive interbreeding in the Canadian Arctic, the American Ornithologists' Union lumped all forms of Brant into a single species. The validity of this decision has recently come into doubt, based on newer molecular analyses and detailed studies of breeding populations, all of which argue for the reinstatement of Black Brant to full species status. In this report, we describe this latest record of Black Brant in New York and briefly review previous occurrences in the state.

INTRODUCTION

Brant (referred to as Brent Goose in Europe) is a small and rather attractive dark goose with a circumpolar breeding distribution along the coasts and islands of the Arctic Ocean. Outside of the breeding season, Brant are found on mudflats and short-grass habitats along the Pacific and Atlantic coasts of North America and Eurasia where they feed on marine plants, especially eelgrasses. In recent years, Brant have successfully adapted to man-made coastal grasslands such as ornamental lawns and golf courses. Three subspecies are recognized with two occurring in North America - the Atlantic Brant (*Branta bernicla hrota*) and the Black Brant (*B. b. nigricans*). As its name implies, Atlantic Brant winters in the mid-Atlantic States with a significant fraction wintering in New York. Black Brant is restricted to Alaska and the Pacific flyway as far south as

Baja, Mexico. Here we describe the remarkable occurrence of three Black Brant that wintered with Atlantic Brant in the vicinity of Riis Park, Queens County during the winter of 1997/98.

DISCOVERY OF THREE INDIVIDUALS AT RIIS PARK IN QUEENS

On Sunday, 7 Dec 1997, the authors located an adult Black Brant on the public golf course at Riis Park in Queens County, NY. The bird was observed feeding near the northeast corner of the golf course with a flock of at least five hundred Atlantic Brant. It was first seen through the chain-link fence from the northeast corner of the golf course at around 9:50 am. Notes and photographs were taken while watching the bird through telescopes (up to 60x). When we left the park at around 12 noon, the Brant flock was not present on the golf course but was observed together with the Black Brant later that day (Peter Shen, pers. comm.). Following our initial observation, we alerted the local birding community and the bird was seen several more times in following days, either on the Riis Park golf course or the open lawns at Floyd Bennett Field less than one mile to the north (Doug Futuyma, pers. comm.).

On 22 Dec, Ethyl Hill and Marty Sohmer reported two Black Brant at the golf course, and a string of reports of either one or two birds followed through the month into January of 1998. On 17 Jan, the authors observed three birds, all adults, simultaneously on the Riis Park golf course. Scanning through the large Brant flock spread across the whole golf course, we found two individuals grazing together on one side and an additional bird feeding on the opposite side. ***To our knowledge, the presence of three individuals at one location is unprecedented in eastern North America.***

Despite wandering extensively, "the pair" remained within a few feet of each other at all times. With respect to plumage, we could not discern any tangible differences between the three birds. The accompanying pair of photographs by Guthrie (Figures 1 and 2) were taken on 17 Jan 1998 and show a single Black Brant with Atlantic Brant at the entrance to Floyd Bennett Field. We presume this corresponds to the unpaired individual. On subsequent occasions, we observed either a single bird or two birds close to each other, suggesting there may have been three birds all along, with observers happening upon either "the loner" or "the pair". Indeed, the Brant flock was usually broken into several smaller flocks feeding on different areas of lawn at Riis and Floyd Bennett and we presume the Black Brant were simply spread among these. The last Black Brant sighting was made on 12 Apr 1998, when Wilson observed a single bird in a small Brant flock (~150) on the grassy embankment leading onto the Marine Parkway.

IDENTIFICATION OF THE RIIS PARK BIRDS

The first Black Brant (discovered on 7 Dec 1997) was initially picked out among the several hundred Atlantic Brant by its overall darker color, more distinct neck collar and dark belly extending between the legs to the vent. The belly and lower flanks were much darker than on neighboring adult Atlantic Brant, creating a striking 'white wedge' between the dark lower flanks (the edges of belly patch) and the dark folded wings. The flanks feathers appeared to be dark based with broad white, slightly frayed, tips. The flank feathers nearest the base of the tail showed the greatest amount of dark color, creating an ill-defined posterior boundary to the white wedge. This boundary thus separated the flank from the immaculate white tail and upper and undertail coverts. The scapulars and coverts were slightly darker than on the accompanying adult Atlantic Brant. The dark feathering of the breast extended across the belly and between the legs to the base of the vent region. Thus, when the bird was facing directly away, it was still easily identified by this dark wedge extending between the legs. The white collar (or neck ring) was broader and more evident than on any of the adult Atlantic Brant, meeting at the front of the throat. The wing coverts were all dark (lacking the white tips of first-years) confirming that this was an adult bird.

Although the separation of Black Brant from Atlantic Brant is relatively straightforward, it was important to rigorously eliminate Dark-bellied Brant (*B. b. bernicla*). The nominate Dark-bellied Brant, breeds in northwestern Siberia and winters in western Europe. Like Black Brant, Dark-bellied Brant shows more extensive dark underparts than Atlantic Brant but according to the literature and all of the photographs we have examined, there is always a clear contrast between the black upper breast and dark brown lower breast (Millington, 1997; Ebels, 1997; Garner, 1998). In the Black Brant at Riis Park there was virtually no contrast. We would also expect the white flank patch of Dark-bellied Brant to be much reduced and the white neck collar to more closely resemble that of Atlantic Brant, which was not the case with the Riis Park birds.

OCCURRENCE IN NEW YORK AND NORTHEASTERN NORTH AMERICA

Black Brant breeds in eastern Russia, Alaska and NW Canada primarily on the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta as well as Alaska's North Slope (reviewed in Reed et al., 1998). In fall, Black Brant gather in staging grounds such as the Izembeck Lagoon in western Alaska and then

migrate some 3000 miles down the length of the Pacific seaboard of North America to wintering grounds in California and Baja, Mexico. Black Brant is a vagrant to eastern North America with a small numbers of records from Atlantic coastal states. There are approximately eight previous records from New York State and these are summarized in Table 1. Every record involves single birds and all but one or two come from Long Island. The distribution and timing of these records closely parallel the movements of Atlantic Brant. The paucity of inland records reflects the strong preference for marine habitats and ability to travel almost nonstop to and from staging grounds in the Canadian arctic. The extensive intertidal mudflats and grasslands of Jamaica Bay (Queens and Kings counties) host a large wintering population of Atlantic Brant and correspondingly account for the most records. The brief summary in *Bull's Birds of New York State* (Levine, 1998) omits two documented records: a specimen from Oneida Lake which according to Bull was not confirmed by an ornithologist and, more surprisingly, a well-documented spring record from Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge in 1976. This bird was seen by many experienced observers and an excellent photograph was published in *The Kingbird* (Costa and Davis, 1976).

Black Brant is equally rare in neighboring coastal states. There are at least seven reports of Black Brant from New Jersey this century. Again all were singles with four of the records being from Brigantine NWR (T. Halliwell, pers. com.). There are at least nine records for Massachusetts and again all reports are of single birds (Veit and Petersen, 1993). As far as we can determine, there are no accepted records for Connecticut (Zeranski and Baptist, 1990), Virginia, Maryland or the District of Columbia (M. Iliff and E.S. Brinkley, pers. com.).

ORIGINS OF VAGRANCY

The breeding grounds of Atlantic Brant and Black Brant meet in arctic Canada (Reed et al., 1998) and it is possible that the New York birds joined up with migrating Atlantic Brant within the arctic. Indeed, there is evidence from banding recoveries that post-breeding movements such as from the nesting grounds to sheltered areas where adults gather to molt their flight feathers increases the possibility of a small group of Black Brant becoming mixed with molting Atlantic Brant and then migrating south with them. Interestingly, Black Brant is a more regular vagrant in western Europe than in eastern North America. For example, there were thirteen accepted records for Britain in 1997 alone (Rogers, 1998). Black Brant in Europe are found with both Atlantic Brant and

Dark-bellied Brant suggesting North American and Siberian origins. The higher numbers probably also reflect greater scrutiny of goose flocks in general and a greater interest in subspecific identification.

TAXONOMIC STATUS

The taxonomy of Brant is complex and in need of revision. At least three subspecies are currently recognized, Atlantic Brant (*B. b. hrota*) Black Brant (*B. b. nigricans*), and Dark-bellied Brant (*B. b. bernicla*). The American Ornithologists' Union lumps all of these forms into a single species. The merging of Black Brant and Atlantic Brant is based on a supposed zone of intergradation in the central Canadian Arctic (Delacour and Zimmer, 1952). However, more recent analysis of mitochondrial DNA from birds collected on Melville Island (the supposed intergrade zone) challenges this assertion and argues that these "intergrades" are not recent hybrids but are a separate population and perhaps even a separate subspecies, the "Gray-bellied Brant" (Shields, 1990). Breeding on Melville Island and wintering in the Puget Sound area of the Pacific Northwest, there is little published information on "Gray-bellied Brant" and it has not been assigned a scientific name. According to Martin Garner, "Gray-bellied Brant" differs from Black Brant in having slightly greater contrast between the upper and lower sections of the breast, a reduced black apron that does not extend much beyond the legs and a less complete neck collar (Garner, 1998). Clearly, none of these features agree with the Riis Park birds.

To further muddy the waters concerning the status of these forms in the eastern states, there is a strong resemblance between "Gray-bellied Brant" and "Lawrence's Brant" - a supposedly extinct form described by George Lawrence based on several specimens collected in New Jersey during the 1880's (Lawrence, 1846; Delacour and Zimmer, 1952). Published accounts and extant specimens are scheduled for review by the New Jersey Bird Records Committee which added Black Brant to the review list in 1996 (T. Halliwell, pers. com.). To make matters worse, one of Lawrence's extant specimens (AMNH #3211) a female shot near Egg Harbor, New Jersey in January 1846, is widely cited as the type specimen for Black Brant and this may well be incorrect (Garner, 1998).

Suffice to say that the new genetic data, combined with plumage and range differences, has led to calls for Black Brant, Atlantic Brant and Dark-bellied Brant to each be granted full species status (De Benedictis, 1991; Millington, 1997; Sangster et al., 1997; Reed et al., 1998), with a possible fourth species, Gray-bellied Brant, on the horizon. Very few mixed

nigricans x hrota pairs have been recorded despite a small overlap in their breeding ranges (reviewed in Garner, 1998). In contrast, more frequent interbreeding between *nigricans* and *bernicla* occurs in the Olenyok Delta, in eastern Siberia, which marks the current zone of overlap. Mixed pairs constitute as much as 9% of the breeding population and may reflect the recent westward expansion of Black Brant that winter in North America (Syroechkovski et al., 1998). Occasional hybrids have been sighted in Europe, including one *nigricans x bernicla* pair with two hybrid young observed in Holland (Berrevoets and Erkman, 1992). Whether this small degree of mixing presents a serious challenge to the calls for specific status will require further study and debate. Although much research is needed, the potential change in the status of Black Brant underscores the importance of fully documenting identifiable forms even when they do not appear on species checklists.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thanks to Tom Halliwell, Ned Brinkley, Marshall Iliff and Paul Lehman for help with records from neighboring states, Tony Lauro and Emanuel Levine for assistance in tracking down relevant literature.

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Figure 1

Figure 2

Figures 1 and 2. Two photographs of the 'lone' Black Brant with Atlantic Brant at the entrance to Floyd Bennett Field, Kings Co., NY on 17 Jan 1998. The very black upper parts, discrete white flank patch and striking collar are clearly visible in these photographs. In Figure 2, the black apron can be seen to extend between the legs to the vent. Photographs by Andrew Guthrie.

OCCURRENCE OF BLACK BRANT IN NEW YORK STATE

1840-one off Islip, Suffolk Co. (*Auk* 10 p.271; Bull,1974)

1889-one, spring, Babylon, Suffolk Co. (*Auk* 10 p.266; Bull 1974)

1889-one*, 30 Oct, Oneida Lake. (*Auk* 10, p.266; Bull, 1974)

1908-one, 31 March, Babylon, Suffolk Co. (Bull, 1974)

1946-one, 30 March ,Merrrck Bay ,Nassau Co. (Bull and Komorowski in Bull (1974)

1949-one, 13 November, Burntship Creek, Niagara Co. (Byron, Clement, Nathan, Seeber and Wright in Bull, 1974)

1959-one, 25 October, Mattituck,Suffolk Co. (E. Morgan in Bull, 1974)

1974-one, 14 October to 29 November, Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge, Queens Co., (Ash, Davis et al. In Davis 1975)

1979-one, 22-25 May, Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge, Queens Co. (M Larsen, N.Larsen, Ash, Burke et al, in Costa and Davis, 1976)

1987-one, 3 March, Riis Park, Queens Co. (Baumann in *Kingbird* 27: p.174)

1998-maximum of three, Riis Park, QueensCo. (A.Wilson, A. Guthrie et al., this paper)

*specimen not examined by an ornithologist

VIEW FROM MOUNT PETER

Judith Cinquina
65 Anona Drive
Upper Saddle River, NJ 07458

"All the birds in Canada and New England are bailing out. Not a day passes that we don't see streams of titmice, chickadees, both nuthatches, and finches moving past Mount Peter." A severe summer drought caused a food shortage that presumably may have precipitated mass movements of birds during the fall of 1995, and birders positioned on northeast lookouts, had a front row view of the spectacle. The view from the Mount Peter Hawk Watch was particularly impressive that October. Witness my notes from October 19: "In the low 70's. Wind light out of the northwest. What a day! Everything suddenly got the urge to move: parids, nuthatches, Yellow-rumps, and White-throats. Red-tails took off. Hermit Thrushes stirred up the leaves around the platform. A Common Loon flew over, and nine male Evening Grosbeaks came up out of the valley. They were as bright as buttercups. Tacked onto the end of a string of Brant was a huge, brown bird, large bill hanging down. Suspected a pelican. Almost missed the Golden Eagle..." I recorded 29 different species that day, ten of them raptors. Sometimes, hawk watching from Mount Peter can be as good as it gets.

1995 also brought record Red-shoulders and Red-tails over Mount Peter. On October 30, Red-tailed Hawks broke a daily record on light, northeast winds. Ken Witkowski and I counted 226, with 102 Red-tails noted between 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. Writing in the *HMANA Journal*, Steve Walter called that record "absolutely stunning for the Northeast region" (which includes sites east of the Appalachians). Walter continued, "This was a big year (1995) for Red-tailed Hawk. Every full time watch (in his Northeast region) had either its highest total ever or the highest in years." Over its long history, Mount Peter's fall watch has reflected raptor population trends as consistently as the combined statistics from all other Northeast watches. Our final tally for that fall, a record 828 Red-tailed Hawks and 105 Red-shoulders.

HISTORY

Located in Orange County, Region 9, along 17A between Greenwood Lake and Warwick, Mount Peter is a few miles north of the NY-NJ border and adjacent to the Appalachian Trail. At 1210 feet, it offers a sweeping view west of the still rural Warwick Valley, that has made the site popular with sightseers since before the turn of the century. The Mount Peter House was built below the lookout in 1890 to accommodate visitors and was later replaced by the Valley View Inn. The first hawk watch was conducted there in 1958 by Stiles Thomas and members of the Fyke Nature Association of Bergen County, NJ as part of the "Across the State Hawk Watch of 1958" sponsored by the Montclair Bird Club of NJ. The two-day watch, on September 20 and October 18, produced 349 raptors of 10 species for Mount Peter and enough excitement to propel volunteers into a full-time count.

In 1971, the Highlands Audubon Society of Oak Ridge, NJ took over the count. That year remains special for the 6,658 Broad-winged Hawks counted on September 21, a daily record for Mt. Peter that still stands. In 1981, the watch was extended into mid-November. Over the years, two microwave towers were installed approximately 600 feet in front of the lookout. At first considered a catastrophe, these 235 foot towers have become an integral part of the watch, marking the exact NNE spot where the majority of migrant hawks first appear. In 1990, the lookout was threatened by development. Thanks to the efforts of many groups and individuals, but especially to former Mount Peter volunteers Fred and Wava Abbott of Orange County Audubon, the five-acre site was purchased by New York State. Also in 1990, serendipity brought Warwick Eagle Scout John Barrack to the lookout in search of a project, and with the guidance of volunteer Lew Dumont, he fulfilled one of our dreams by constructing a viewing platform across the south end of the lookout rock. This fall, Mount Peter will conduct its 42nd annual watch. It is the third longest running hawk watch in the country.

GEOGRAPHY

Situated at 41° 15′ latitude and 74° 17′ longitude, Mount Peter is the highest point on Bellvale Mountain in Warwick. It is part of a broken, eroded ridge that begins approximately 16 miles to the northeast as Skunnemunk (also Schunnemunk) Mountain near Cornwall- on- the-Hudson. The narrowness of the ridge and its southwest direction effectively concentrate migrant hawks until they reach the lookout. Here, they

have two choices. Most take advantage of the height they achieve over the lookout and strike out west/southwest towards the Kittatinnies. Others, especially eagles, pursue the ridge south down the west side of Greenwood Lake. However, south of the lookout the ridge spreads out considerably and updrafts and lift are lost.

The lookout faces up the ridge, NNE. To the west is the town of Warwick and a rural valley that runs for approximately 20 miles to the Shawangunk and Kittatinny mountains that are part of the Appalachians. Like a private weather channel, the miles of sky over the valley keep volunteers informed about incoming weather. The westerly winds can race unchecked until they hit the flank of Bellvale Mountain. The updrafts they create can send Sharp-shins up so fast, you'd think they were shot from cannons. To the east is a narrow valley and Tuxedo Mountain. Because of the restricted view, hawks approaching from the east can slip through undetected if a hawk watcher is alone.

WEATHER

Like most fall hawk watches in the Northeast, Mount Peter can get good flights after a cold front moves through. But if the front is followed by westerly winds, migrants will often leave the ridge north of the lookout and strike out over the valley and become lost in the haze. This is especially true of Broad-wings and Red-tails. November 12, 1983 was such a day. Mount Peter tallied 48 Red-tails on very strong west winds, while closer to the Kittatinnies west of us, Neil Currie counted over 300 raptors, mostly Red-tails, from Route 84. In September, it is the Broad-wings we lose out in the valley as hundreds kettle up and melt into the haze before they can be counted.

Sometimes south winds are good. In 1986 they brought two record Sharp-shin days, 317 on September 28 with mild SSE winds, and 337 the next day with winds out of the SW. East winds are also productive at times. They brought a near record 46 Ospreys on September 19, 1964 and 43 more on September 27, 1986. That latter date also produced a record 15 Northern Harriers, 93 Sharp-shins, and four Peregrine Falcons, altogether 243 raptors, and that was in light rain! As these examples indicate, Mount Peter's hawk migration is often unpredictable. Nevertheless, most of our daily records have been set on more traditional northwest winds.

MONITORING RAPTOR POPULATIONS

For the last 21 years, Mount Peter's fall watch has averaged 7,864 raptors and vultures of 16 species in 63 days between September 1 and November 15. Although not impressive statistics, and in spite of the low volume, Mount Peter's numbers have mirrored the ups and downs of most raptor populations detected by other Northeast sites. The watch was begun 42 years ago when the effects of DDT were just becoming apparent, and it has monitored the comeback of both Ospreys and Bald Eagles. An average of 85 Ospreys was counted prior to 1978 at Mount Peter, but that figure rose to 159 over the last 21 years, an 87% increase. Bald Eagles increased from 1.4 to an average of 8.8 since 1986, with yearly records set in 1996, 1997, and 1998 of 13, 15, and 13 respectively, records that probably reflect the successful introduction of Bald Eagles in New York State. It is especially encouraging that half of these eagles were immature.

Mount Peter recorded a dramatic increase in Sharp-shinned Hawks in 1978 when 1,073 were tallied in 280 hours. That was a 76% increase over the 462 counted in 271 hours in 1974. Other Northeast sites recorded this increase in the early 1970's. Sharpie counts remained high through the mid-1980's, when many lookouts began to record a decline. Again trailing, Mount Peter didn't detect a decline until 1992 when 921 sharpies were counted in 415 hours. Primarily adult sharpies use this ridge, so the numbers more closely reflect a breeding population and quite possibly a unique population not monitored by other sites.

Two years before sharpie numbers began to drop, Cooper's Hawks increased at Mount Peter. 1990 saw triple digits for the first time ever at the site with 118 Cooper's tallied. 1994 and 1995 toppled that record with 134 and 150 respectively. This increase in Cooper's Hawks was detected at many sites in the Northeast, and perhaps is related in some way to the decrease in sharpies.

In 1980, the watch was extended into mid-November and an increase in Northern Harriers was recorded, averaging 81 between 1980 and 1989. Since then, that average has dropped to 48, although coverage remained constant. There is no doubt that this species is in trouble. There has also been a decline in American Kestrels. Mount Peter's best daily kestrel count was 210 way back on October 11, 1965, and seasonal records (above 450) for kestrels were all made prior to 1982.

Like most eastern inland hawk watches, Mount Peter records low numbers of both Merlins and Peregrine Falcons, while coastal sites such as Fire Island, NY and Cape May, NJ log the bulk of the falcon migration.

One reason for this disparity might be that both Merlins and Peregrine Falcons, unlike the American Kestrel, winter along the east coast of the United States and not inland. Mount Peter, along with other inland watches, recorded an extraordinary number of Merlins (30) and Peregrine Falcons (21) in 1990, far above our 21-year average of 11 and 8 respectively.

Both Red-shouldered and Red-tailed Hawk numbers increased when the watch was extended into November. Both species are affected annually by weather patterns in late October and early November. When few fronts move through before the watch shuts down in mid-November, low numbers are recorded. The site's best year for both species was 1995, when 828 Red-tails and 109 Red-shoulders were tallied.

Turkey Vultures were first monitored at Mount Peter in 1980, and the first Black Vultures appeared five years later. Both species frequent farm fields in the valley and come and go over the lookout throughout the watch period. It isn't until mid-October, when we detect the first vultures moving directly south, that we begin to record their numbers; consequently, both are probably undercounted. Prior to 1997, the highest count of Black Vultures at any one time was six. On October 31, 1997, a record 31 thermaled over the lookout and headed south. Both 1997 and 1998 saw record numbers of this species moving south with 66 and 68 recorded, respectively.

Mount Peter records too few Rough-legged Hawks to draw any conclusions from numbers recorded. Golden Eagles were also in this category until 1993 and 1994 when 9 and 12 inexplicably used the ridge. Eight more went through in 1996, and then things returned to normal in 1997 and 1998 with one and four recorded. Mount Peter's Broad-winged Hawk flight is too erratic to be meaningful in itself, but it is exciting to see the site's tallies supporting the annual BROADWING SEPT project of Kirk and Lois Moulton. The acronym SEPT stands for SOUTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA TRANSECT. The Moultons analyze data from all the Northeast sites, and when weather patterns push the Broad-wings westward, Mount Peter sometimes has the only significant flight.

UNUSUAL SPECIES

Including raptors and vultures, 145 different bird species have been seen from Mount Peter. The most unique include: Wood Stork, Tundra Swan, Iceland Gull, Bonaparte's Gull, Western Kingbird, "Audubon's" Warbler, Pine Grosbeak, and White-winged Crossbill., almost all seen in October. The first Common Raven was recorded in 1968. The next one

wasn't seen until 1982. Four years later, a pair was noted. By 1997, ravens were observed frequently over Mount Peter and suspected to be nesting up the ridge.

Mount Peter is conveniently located, scenic, and often not crowded in spite of increased publicity that has brought visitors from all over the country and the world. Although not wheelchair accessible, the lookout is an easy climb up a stairway and short trail from the parking lot. Anytime between September 11 and 21, after inclement weather has held back the migration, a cold front can open the floodgates and release thousands of hawks, primarily Broad-wings, but exceptional flights are rare and require patience and luck. October and November offer more variety, a stronger chance of rarities and closer encounters. From 9 A.M. to 5 P.M., September 1 to November 15, this grand procession of migrants can be enjoyed from Mount Peter. Volunteers are welcome.

Come enjoy a front row view. To reach the lookout, take Route 94 to Warwick and follow 17A up the mountain. Just past the Mount Peter ski sign, you will come to Kain Road on your left. Turn here. The entrance to the lookout is on your right, marked by a NY State sign. You can also reach the lookout from Greenwood Lake. North of the center of town, turn west up 17A. When you reach the top of the mountain, you will see "steep grade" signs on your right. Kain Road is a short distance further on your right.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Since 1958, Mount Peter has been manned each fall by volunteers. It was their commitment and dedication that made this report possible. I would like to thank Stiles Thomas and Drew Panko for reviewing this report and making suggestions.

SUMMARY OF FALL MIGRATION (1958-1998)

Species	Maximum Daily Count	(Date)	Maximum Annual Count	(Year)	21-YEAR AVERAGE 1978-1998
Black Vulture	31	(10/13/97)	68	(1998)	7
Turkey Vulture	49	(10/22/98)	269	(1998)	71
Osprey	48	(09/19/93)	233	(1990)	159
Bald Eagle	4	(09/13/92)	15	(1997)	7
Northern Harrier	15	(09/27/86)	101	(1980)	67
Sharp-shinned Hawk	337	(09/29/86)	2,440	(1986)	1,483
Cooper's Hawk	28	(10/13/91)	150	(1995)	73
N. Goshawk	4	(10/13/91)	12	(3 years)	6
Red-shouldered Hawk	23	(10/16/83)	109	(1995)	54
Broad-winged Hawk	6,658	(09/21/71)	10,944	(1971)	5,097
Red-tailed Hawk	226	(10/30/95)	828	(1995)	432
Rough-legged Hawk	2	(10/22/76)	5	(1990)	1
Golden Eagle	3	10/13/94)	12	(1994)	3
Peregrine Falcon	5	(10/17/92)	21	(1990)	8
Merlin	8	(10/17/92)	30	(1990)	11
American Kestrel	210	(09/11/65)	592	(1981)	279
Total Hawks	6,787	(09/21/71)	14,468	(1981)	7,864

REPORT OF THE NEW YORK STATE AVIAN RECORDS COMMITTEE FOR 1996

The Committee made decisions on a total of 87 sightings of birds involving 123 reports. These included 84 reports from 1996 (including five second-round reports), one from 1995 (1996 sighting) and two from 1987. Eleven additional reports were filed without review because they were sightings of species not on the list of those which should be reported to the NYSARC (see *Kingbird* 48(4): 301-302, December 1998).The inclusion in reports of the town in which the sighting was made would be very useful to the Committee. Reports and other correspondence for the Committee should be sent to the Secretary:

Jim Lowe, Secretary
Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology
159 Sapsucker Woods Rd.
Ithaca, New York 14850

1996 ACCEPTED REPORTS

Pacific/Arctic Loon *(Gavia pacifica/arctica)*. 1996 74 A: one in Niagara River gorge at Niagara Falls,Town of Niagara., Niagara Co., 24 November (RGS)

Western Grebe *(Aechmophorus occidentalis)*. 1996 22 A G: one on Beaver (Mud) Lake, Beaver Lake Nature Center , Town of Lysander, Onondaga Co., 24 April to 6 May (MT, DC, MAK,WP, MR, SA, CM). This is the fifth record for the state.

Black-capped Petrel *(Pterodroma hasitata)*. 1996 59 A B: one found dead on Coach Road, 2 miles east of Skaneateles, Town of Skaneateles, Onondaga Co., 10 September (DC,NB). Photos on file.

Northern Gannet *(Morus bassanus)*. 1996 67 A: one over Lake Ontario off Hamlin Beach State Park, Town of Hamlin, Monroe Co., 16 November (RGS)

American White Pelican *(Pelecanus erythrorhynchos)* . 1996 43 A: one on shore of Strawberry Island,Niagara River, Town of Tonawanda, Erie Co. ,1 2 June (WW).

Anhinga *(Anhinga anhinga)*. 1996 45 A: one at Cornell University Ponds, Unit 2, Town of Ithaca, Tompkins Co., 10 June (DH). This is the second record for the state.

Tricolored Heron *(Egretta tricolor)*. 1996 38 A: one at Tifft Nature Preserve, City of Buffalo,Erie Co.,16 May (WW)

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron *(Nyctanassa violacea)*. 1996 20-A: one at south end of Conesus Lake, Town of Conesus, Livingston Co., 18 April (MZ,BBea).

Black Vulture *(Coragyps atratus)*. 1996 5 A: one in gorge of Genesee River at Letchworth State Park, Town of Portage, Wyoming Co., 1 January(RGS); 1996-30-A;one at Berkshire Rd. near Ten Mile River, Town of Dover, Dutchess Co., 11 May(BB);1996-31-A: one at Mohonk Mountain House at the southern end of Eagle Cliff,Shawangunk Mountains, UlsterCo., 14 May(BB);1996-44-A: one at Derby Hill, Town of Mexico, Oswego Co., 2 June(WP).

Ross's Goose *(Chen rossii)*. 1996 71 A: one at Tomhannock Reservoir, Town of Pittstown, Rensselaer Co., 23 November (RB).

Tufted Duck *(Aythya fuligula)*. 1996 49 A B: one at Batavia Wastewater Treatment Plant lagoons, Town of Batavia, Genesee Co., 8,14 July(WW,WD).

Mississippi Kite *(Ictinia mississippiensis)*. 1996 55 A: one at Central Park, New York City, New York Co., 7 September (TF).

Swainson's Hawk *(Buteo swainsoni)*. 1996 23 A: one at Braddock Bay Hawk Watch, Town of Greece ,Monroe Co., 27 April (RGS).

Black Rail *(Laterallus jamaicensis)*. 1996 79 A C: one at Perch River Wildlife Management Area, Town of Brownville, Jefferson Co., 19 25 June (NL,BJ,MAK). Sound tape on file.

Sandhill Crane *(Grus canadensis)*. 1996 18 A: three at Greenwell Farm, Church Road, Town of Hamlin, Monroe Co., 8 April (BM); 1996 24 A: one at Lakeshore Marshes Wildlife Management Area, Town of Wolcott, Wayne Co., 1 May (GW); 1996 52 A: six at Wilson Tuscarora State Park, Town of Wilson, Niagara Co., 18 April (WD); 1996 53 A:

one at somville Road, Town of Porter, Niagara Co., 22 April (WD); 1996 69 A B: three off County Road 37, Town of West Bloomfield, Ontario Co., 19 22 November (KF,RGS)

American Avocet *(Recurvirostra americana)*. 1996 51 A: one at the mouth of Salmon Creek, Town of Lansing, Tompkins Co., 26 July (KD).

Marbled Godwit *(Limosa fedoa)*. 1996 33 A-E: . one on Ithaca golf course opposite Stewart Park at south end of Cayuga Lake,Town of Ithaca,Tompkins Co.,(DT-H,RS,SK,KD,CM).

Long-tailed Jaeger *(Stercorarius longicaudus)*. 1996 56 A: one at Niagara River, City of Buffalo, Erie Co., 8 September (AW).

Mew Gull *(Larus canus)*. 1996 68 A: one in Niagara River gorge below Niagara Falls, City of Niagara Falls, Town of Niagara, Niagara Co., 10 November (SS,BMo);1996-81-A-B:one at Robert Moses Power Station,Niagara River,Town of Lewiston, Niagara Co.,17 November (BC,RK).

California Gull *(Larus californicus)*. 1996 82 A: one at Niagara River, Town of Lewiston, Niagara Co., 10 November (WD); 1996 83 A C: one and two (on the 24th) at Niagara River, Town of Lewiston, Niagara Co., 16, 17,23,24 November (WD,JD), and one at Niagara Falls, Town of Niagara, Niagara Co., 24 November(JDu); 1996 84 A: one at Niagara River, Town of Lewiston , Niagara Co., 7 Dec (WD). Please note that the total number of individuals involved in the above reports remains uncertain.

Roseate Tern *(Sterna dougallii)*. 1996 42 A: one at Braddock Bay, Town of Greece., Monroe Co., 20 22 May (ML).

Arctic Tern *(Sterna paradisaea)*. 1996 48 A: one at Shinnecock Bay west of Tiana Beach, Town of Southampton, Long Island, Suffolk Co., 16 June (ES).

Sooty Tern *(Sterna fuscata)*. 1996 58 A C: one at Hamlin Beach State Park, Town of Hamlin, Monroe Co. , 10 September(KF,CC)

Northern Hawk Owl *(Surnia ulula)*. 1996 70 A: one off State Route 30, 1.5 miles northwest of Big Brook Bridge, Town of Long Lake, Hamilton Co., 18 November (TD).

Great Gray Owl *(Strix nebulosa)*. 1996 8 A:one at Town Park, Town of New Hartford, Oneida Co.,22 February (DC);1996-9-A: one in woods behind and perched by a bird feeder at 91 Louden Rd.,Saratoga Springs, Saratoga Co., sporadically about three weeks in February(LC), photo on file;1996-10-A:one in Town of Fort Ann, Washington Co.,27 February to 23 March(BP),photo on file;1996-17-A: one at St. Lawrence Road.(Rte. 9), Town of Cape Vincent, Jefferson Co.29 March (NL),photo on file;1996-21-A-D:one at corner of Mud Mill and Bear Springs Roads.,Brewerton, Town of Cicero,Onondaga Co.,23 April(DC,MAK,GH,SA);1996-35-A-B: one at Town Line Rd.Town of Yates, Orleans Co., 18-19 May(RGS,WD);1996-41-A: one at Somerset(Kintigh) Station, Town of Somerset,Niagara Co.,5-6 May(PS), photo on file.

Rufous Hummingbird *(Selasphorus rufus)*. 1996 65-A-C:one at 8611 State Road (Route 240), Town of Colden, Erie Co., 4,6 Oct. (JW,WW,WD). Photos on file. This is the third state record.

Western Kingbird *(Tyrannus verticalis)*. 1996 61 A: one at power line northwest of Ellenville, Town of Wawarsing, Ulster Co., 13 September (VF).

Bell's Vireo *(Vireo bellii)*. 1996 62 A: one in Central Park., New York City, New York Co., 18 September (TF). This is the third record for the state.

Northern Wheatear *(Oenanthe oenanthe)*. 1996 63 A: one at James A. Fitzpatrick Nuclear Power Plant,Lake Road, Town of Scriba, Oswego Co., 19 September (MAK).

Veery *(Catharus fuscescens)*. 1996 80 A: one at Wurtsboro, Town of Mamakating, Sullivan Co., 30 December (DN)

Yellow-throated Warbler *(Dendroica dominica)*. 1996 26 A: one at Webster Park, Town of Webster, Monroe Co., 5 May (DT); 1996 32 A: one at Erie Canal Park, Town of Camillus, Onondaga Co., 10 May (SA); 1996 36 A: one off Thomas Road, Town of Enfield, Tompkins Co., 22 May (JB); 1996 37 A: one at Snowshoe Point, Town of Henderson, Jefferson Co., 28 May (NL); 1996 76A: one at Mechanicville, Town of Halfmoon, Saratoga Co., 10 December (AVK).

Western Tanager *(Piranga ludoviciana)*. 1996 60 A: one at St. Bernard's Cemetery, Little Lake Colby, Saranac Lake, Town of Harrietstown, Franklin Co., 11 September (TD).

Le Conte's Sparrow *(Ammodramus leconteii)*. 1996 29 A: one at Battery Park, New York City, New York Co., 17 March (PO). Photo on file. This is the ninth record for the state.

Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow *(Ammodramus nelsoni)*. 1996 66 A: one at Hog Hole, Allen Treman Marina, Ithaca, Town of Ithaca., Tompkins Co., 27 October (SK).

Blue Grosbeak *(Guiraca caerulea)*. 1996 40 A D: one at 142 Old Route 9, Fishkill, Town of Fishkill,Dutchess Co.,18 May(BM,BB,S&JD,PR).

Painted Bunting *(Passerina ciris)*. 1996 34 A: one at Beaver Lake Nature Center, Town of Lysander, Onondaga Co., 22 May (MR).

Hoary Redpoll *(Carduelis hornemanni)*. 1996 6 A: two on Grandview Lane feeder, Greece, Town of Greece, Monroe Co., 1 January (KG); 1996 13 A B: one on Hunt Hill Road, 7 miles east southeast of Ithaca, Town of Dryden, Tompkins Co., 17 20 March (JF,SK);1996 14 A B: one at 528 Glenview Court, Webster, Town of Webster, Monroe Co., 21 24 March (D&DT); 1996 47 A: one off Lower Lake Road west of Quaker Road, Town of Somerset, Niagara Co., 17 February (WD).

1996 ACCEPTED REPORTS, ORIGIN UNCERTAIN

Trumpeter Swan *(Cygnus buccinator)*,1996 39 A D: 2 adults, one on nest and later with two young at Perch River Wildlife Management Area, Jefferson Co., 26 May, 11,13 June (SK,MAK,DF,DC); 1996 50 A: one at Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge, Town of Tyre, Seneca Co., 16 July (KM)

1996 REPORTS NOT ACCEPTED

Pacific Loon *(Gavia pacifica)*. 1996-75-A: one on Lake Ontario off Point Breeze,Town of Carlton, Orleans Co.,30 November. This report was accepted as Pacific/Arctic Loon.

Clark's Grebe *(Aechmophorus clarkii)*. 1996 2 A: one at South Inlet of Raquette Lake, Town of Arietta, Hamilton Co., 14 May.

Black-browed Albatross *(Thalassarche melanophris)*. 1996 3 A: one over Atlantic Ocean off Tobay Beach, Town of Hempstead,Long Island, Nassau Co., 27 May.

Black-capped Petrel *(Pterodroma hasitata)*. 1996 73 A: one over Lake Erie near source of Niagara River, Buffalo, Erie Co., 12,14 September.

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron *(Nyctanassa violacea)*. 1996 54 A: one near mouth of Salmon Creek, Town of Lansing, Tompkins Co., 9 August.

Black Vulture *(Coragyps atratus)*. 1996 27 A: one at 926 Elizabeth Street, Ogdensburg, Town of Oswegatchie, St. Lawrence Co., 16 April.

Tufted Duck *(Aythya fuligula)*. 1996 77 A: one at Lake Ontario off Irondequoit, Town of Irondequoit, Monroe Co., 24 December.

Eurasian Hobby *(Falco subbuteo)*. 1996 1 A: one at Jones Island at entrance to Cedar Beach Overlook, Town of Babylon, Long Island, Suffolk Co., 7 April. This report was initially accepted by the Committee, but further careful analysis of it, photographs and comments from others indicated that the bird was not of this species.

Sandhill Crane *(Grus canadensis)*. 1996 46 A: two flying over Manitou, Town of Greece,, Monroe Co., 19 May. This report was accepted as crane species.

Thayer's Gull *(Larus thayeri)*. 1996 15 A: one at Lake Flower, Saranac Lake, Town of North Elba, Harrietstown, Franklin and Essex counties., 26,31 March.

Slaty-backed Gull *(Larus schistisagus)*. 1996 72 A: one at Robert Moses Power Plant, Niagara River, Town of Lewiston, Niagara Co., 1 December.

Arctic Tern *(Sterna paradisaea)*. 1996 19 A: three at Lake Ontario, Rigney Bluff, Town of Greece,Monroe Co., 16 April.

Dovekie *(Alle alle)*. 1996 7 A: one over Lake Ontario off north end of Route 259, Town of Parma, Monroe Co., 30 January.

Great Gray Owl *(Strix nebulosa)*. 1996 16 A: one at Rotary Sunshine Camp, Five Points Road, Town of Rush, Monroe Co., 28 March.

Gray Kingbird *(Tyrannus dominicensis)*. 1996 64 A: at Hawk Watch, Camp Pinnacle Voorheesville, Albany Co., 1 October.

Bell's Vireo *(Vireo bellii)*. 1996 78 A: one near Ponquogue Bridge, Town of Southampton, Long Island, Suffolk Co., 26 October.

Baird's Sparrow *(Ammodramus bairdii)*. 1996 4 A B: one at Point Gratiot, Town of Dunkirk, Chautauqua Co., 15 May.

Le Conte's Sparrow *(Ammodramus leconteii)*. 1996 28 A: one at Lime Kiln Lake, Town of Inlet, Hamilton Co., 21 22 April.

Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow *(Ammodramus nelsoni)*. 1996 57 A: one at Albany Airport, Town of Colonie, Albany Co., 8 September.

Brewer's Blackbird *(Euphagus cyanocephalus)*. 1996 11 A: one at Manitou, Town of Greece, Monroe Co., 14 March; 1996 12 A: one on Transit Road, Town of Kendall, Orleans Co., 15 March.

1995 ACCEPTED REPORT

Gyrfalcon *(Falco rusticolus)*. 1995-35 C: one on City of Buffalo waterfront, Erie Co., 15 January 1996 (WD). This is the same bird as 1995 35 A B.

1987 REPORTS NOT ACCEPTED

Brewer's Blackbird *(Euphagus cyanocephalus)*. 1987 47 A: one at Owl's Head., Town of Bellmont. Franklin Co., 29 October; 1987 48 A: three at Mountain View, south end of Mountain View Lake, Town of Bellmont, Franklin Co, 26 November.

ADDITIONS TO THE NEW YORK STATE LIST

This report contains no additions to the New York State list which now totals 454 species, including Broadbilled Sandpiper, Anna's Hummingbird and Lazuli Bunting, which have been accepted by the Committee and will be published in a future report.

New York State Avian Records Committee

Kenneth P. Able
Robert F. Andrle (Chairman)
Thomas W. Burke
Robert 0. Paxton
Charles R. Smith

OBSERVERS SUBMITTING REPORTS CITED IN THIS REPORT:

Sue Adair, Bob Beason, Allen H. Benton, John Bower, Ned Brinkley, Robert Budliger, Ray Budniewski, Barbara Butler, Carolyn T. Cass, David J.Cesari, Laura Clark, James Connolly, Dorothy Crumb, Bob Curry, Willie D'Anna, Karl David, Joan DeOrsey, Stan DeOrsey, Richard K. Dillenbeck, Tom Dudones, Jon L. Dunn, Donald Feuss, Thomas Fiore, John Fitzpatrick, Kurt Fox, Valerie M. Freer, Kevin C. Griffith, Dennis Hasselquist, Gene Huggins, Carl Jaslowitz, Brian Johnson, Steve Kelling, Richard Knapton, Mary Alice Koeneke, Robert J. Kurtz, Michael J. Lanzone, Gary N. Lee, Nick Leone, Curtis Marantz, Bob Marcotte, Kevin J. McGowan , Barbara Michelin, Brian Mongi, Daniel K. Niven, Richard O'Hara, Paul Osenbaugh, William Purcell, Barb Putnam, Peter Relson, Margaret S. Rusk, Eric Salzman, Paul T. Schnell, Robert Scott, Sharon Skelly, Pat Smith, Robert G. Spahn, Jim Suozzo, Diane Tessaglia-Hymes, Molly Thompson, Donald Traver, Donna Traver, Jan Trzeciak, Alison Van Keuren, William Watson, James L . Wojewodzki, Glenn Wolford, Alan Wormington, Martha L. Zettel

OBITUARY

Geoffrey Carleton 1909-1998

Geoffrey Carleton passed away in Elizabethtown on 13 Dec 1998 at the age of eighty-nine.He was a long-time Federation member, a past president of the Linnaean Society of New York and of the High Peaks Audubon Society. A birder par excellence, he served as Hudson-St.Lawrence Regional Editor for *Audubon Field Notes,* and his writings appeared in *The Auk, The Kingbird,* and *Adirondack Life.*

He studied ornithology with Charles Rogers at Princeton University, graduating with a BA in 1931, and went on to Columbia University where he received a BLS in 1940 and an MA in 1941.

While living in New York City until some thirty plus years ago, he was one of the city's most active and meticulous observers.He wrote "The Birds of Central and Prospect Parks" which was published in the *Linnaean Society's Proceedings Nos. 66-70* in 1958 and the "Supplement to the Birds of Central and Prospect Parks" in Proceedings No. 71 in 1970.

Testimony to his active field life in the metropolitan New York area can be found in the number of records attached to his name in both John *Bull's Birds of the New York Area* (Harper & Row, 1964) and his *Birds of News York State (Doubleday, 1974).*

When the High Peaks Audubon Society was founded in Essex County in 1973, and a newsletter was started, Jeff became mentor and adviser to the editor, a role he played for the next quarter of a century. He also served for many years as Chairman of the Publications Committee, and in 1976 Carleton's *Birds of Essex County, NY* was published, followed by two supplements. In 1980 a Second Edition appeared and the Third Edition has just been printed and is now available.

Jeff was a true "character" and all his friends have a "Jeff story", usually about his lifelong aversion to drafts which he fought by constantly putting on sweaters and scarves removing them, and then putting them on again. My "Jeff story" is about the Federation delegates meeting we both attended many years ago when I noticed his pajamas were sticking out below his trouser legs as an added impediment to cold and drafts.

His Essex County lifelist stands at 272 species, more than any other local observer. It is fitting that the last bird added to that lifelist, a Swainson's Hawk at Witherbee in June 1997, was a first for Essex County.

Emanuel Levine

A PRESUMED HYBRID WARBLER IN BROOKLYN'S PROSPECT PARK: COMMON YELLOWTHROAT X MOURNING WARBLER.

Andrew C. Vallely and Thomas Fiore
132 High Ave. apt. 6 Nyack, New York,
10960,valand@prodigy.net

ABSTRACT

Details are given of a sight record of a presumed hybrid: Common Yellowthroat *(Geothlypis trichas)* X Mourning Warbler *(Oporornis philadelphia)*.

INTRODUCTION

On 11 May 1991 we noticed an unusual looking warbler as it flushed from low herbaceous undergrowth in Prospect Park Brooklyn. By flushing the bird repeatedly to low perches over a period of about 30 minutes, we were able to note most of the bird's plumage characters and to hear it call a few times. A painting of the bird was prepared the following day (see pg. 125). Our field notes contained the following description;

DESCRIPTION

Bill: fairly large for a warbler, and slightly decurved. Upper mandible blackish; lower mandible pinkish near the base.
Face: mostly gray and showing a black eyline extending from the base of the bill (similar to, but slightly broader than that of a Blue-winged Warbler).
Forehead, crown and nape: uniformly gray.
Throat and chin: white, contrasting strongly with the breast.
Remaining underparts: uniform bright yellow.
Upperparts: uniform olive green.
Feet and legs: dull pinkish

VOCALIZATION

The only vocalization given by the bird was a single note chip which we judged to be consistent with that of a Mourning Warbler.

DISCUSSION

The description above does not fit any known warbler plumage, but includes characters which are consistent with members of both *Geothlypis* and *Oporornis*. Dr. Kenneth C. Parkes kindly examined the painting as well as our written descriptions, and concluded that our bird was almost certainly a hybrid; Mourning Warbler *(Oporornis philadelphia)* X Common Yellowthroat *(Geothlypis trichas)*. (K.C. Parkes in lit. August 12, 1991)

The first, and as far as we know, only other report of this combination was given by Bledsoe (1988). Bledsoe describes a specimen in the Peabody Museum which was collected on September 21, 1955 near New Haven, Connecticut.

Hybridization in the Parulinae was reviewed by Morse (1989). Hybrid combinations involving species from different warbler genera have been shown to be more common than hybrid pairs occurring within genera (Parkes 1978).

Parkes et. al (1991) have pointed out that hybrids sometimes show characters, such as the white throat of the bird described here, which are not consistent with either putative parent species. This is also true of the common form of hybrid Blue-winged Warbler X Golden-winged Warbler ("Brewster's" Warbler).

Parkes (in lit.) concluded that In both "Brewster's" Warbler, and this new hybrid combination, the hybrid has inherited 'lack of throat patch' from one parent, in this case, the Yellowthroat parent. In "Brewster's"Warbler, the underparts color, inherited from the golden-wing parent is white, there is no separation between throat and the posterior underparts. In the case of the present hybrid, the underparts color is inherited from the Mourning, but lack-of throat-patch from the Yellowthroat. Examination of spring male Mourning Warblers indicates there is no yellow substrate to the black/gray throat. With the melanin of the throat of the Mourning lacking in the hybrid, one is left with a white throat, just as in "Brewster's" Warbler.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We thank Guy Tudor for his comments and of course, Dr. Kenneth C. Parkes for providing an explanation for this puzzling bird.

LITERATURE CITED

Bledsoe, Anthony H. 1988. A hybrid *Oporornis philadephia x Geothlypis trichas* with comments on the taxonomic interpretation and evolutionary significance of intergeneric hybridization. *Wilson Bulletin* 100: 1-8

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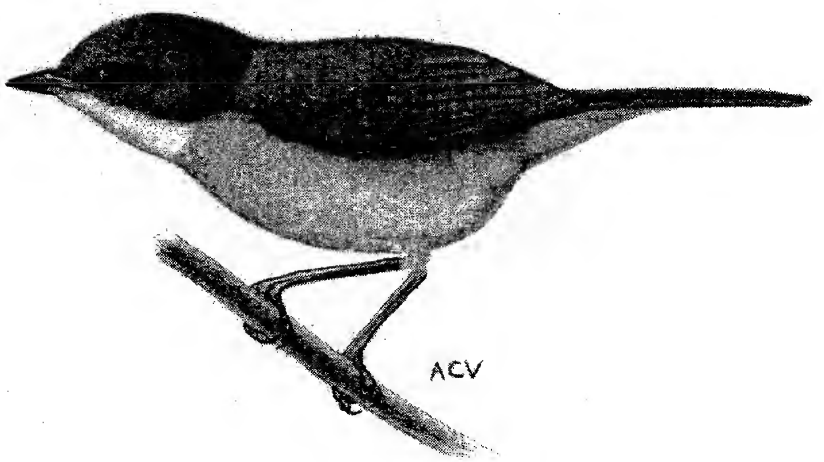
Parkes, Kenneth C. 1978. Still another parulid intergeneric hybrid and it's taxonomic and evolutionary implications. *Auk* 95: 682-90.

Parkes, Kenneth C., Greig, Eldon G. and Van Woerkom, Gordon J. 1991. A dose of genetics. *Birders World* 5 (4): 34-37.



Common Yellowthroat X Mourning Warbler

POLYGYNOUS MATING IN EASTERN PHOEBE

Mark Gretch
P.O. Box 392,
Elizabethtown, N.Y. 12932

ABSTRACT

A polygynous male Eastern Phoebe *(Sayornis phoebe)* is reported from Essex County New York, Town of Elizabethtown in the Adirondack Park. The chronology of the nesting is described and some possible explanations are offered for this behavior.

INTRODUCTION

The Eastern Phoebe *(Sayornis phoebe)* is one of the easiest bird species to observe. They often build their mud nest near human habitation under the eaves of houses, porches, garages, sheds etc. They arrive early and are nature's ultimate harbinger of spring. Over the last six (6) seasons I have documented their arrival at Elizabethtown (Essex County), which is at 900 feet elevation in the Adirondacks. On average they arrive April 10, with a range from April 3 through April 19. In 1998 they arrived on April 11.

OBSERVATIONS

In May I found two (2) active phoebe nests within 67 feet of each other. Stokes (1985) says "the size of their territory is several acres, and territories are usually well dispersed so there are few interactions between neighbors." Wallace (1955) describes the species as "monogamous." Quite early therefore, I suspected that I was observing unusual nesting behavior in this species.

At first I thought I must be observing either a polygynous male, or two separate pairs with territories very close to each other. In either case I thought it deserved further study. As the season progressed I was able to determine that there were only three (3) birds in the vicinity of these two nests, two incubating females and a lone male. I concluded that the male was polygynous.

Over the next few months I documented the chronology of their nesting. The primary female (female that started nesting first) started

laying eggs on May 13, and she eventually had a clutch of five (5) eggs that began to hatch on June 1. On June 15 the young from this nest fledged.

The secondary female had only four (4) eggs in her nest on May 29. On June 10 the eggs began to hatch, and by June 28 the young had fledged. Therefore the young in the primary nest fledged in 14 days, and the young in the secondary nest fledged in 18 days, even though there was one less bird in the secondary nest to feed.

In the secondary nest only the female at first fed the young. It wasn't until the young had fledged in the primary nest that the male was free to help his second mate with feeding. I didn't observe him feeding the young in the secondary nest until June 17. This may explain the longer fledging period of the young in the secondary nest.

While both females were actively feeding young in their respective nests, they seeemingly avoided crossing paths by each foraging in different parts of their nesting territory. I only saw one interaction between the two females, which occurred shortly after young from the primary nest fledged. That day, the secondary female flew down beside one of the fledged young and was quickly chased away by the primary female.

Two weeks after young in the secondary nest fledged I still saw the pair feeding young. If either of the two females produced a second brood they did not do so in the vicinity of the original nesting site. In conclusion, the male by having two mates was able to pass his genes on to nine young, rather than only five.

"Ornithologists long believed that up to 94% of bird species were monogamous" (Morton 1995). New studies using genetic testing techniques have shown that even the most devoted of partners often "sleep around." Is the polygynous mating in phoebes that I observed sporadic promiscuity in an otherwise monogamous species? How often does it occur in this species? Welty and Baptista (1988) says that " a number of species that are normally monogamous occasionally shift into polygamous pair bonds." Is the Eastern Phoebe another documented case of this phenomenon? In this case what were the factors that encouraged the male to take two mates? Did it have anything to do with the unusual weather of 1998. Can we attribute it to El Nino? As in other species did it have something to do with a skewed sex ratio (females outnumbering males). Was the secondary female "widowed" perhaps, causing the male to enlarge his territory to include his "widowed" neighbor? All these are possibilities. Even ordinary birds, like phoebes, provide a never ending supply of questions.

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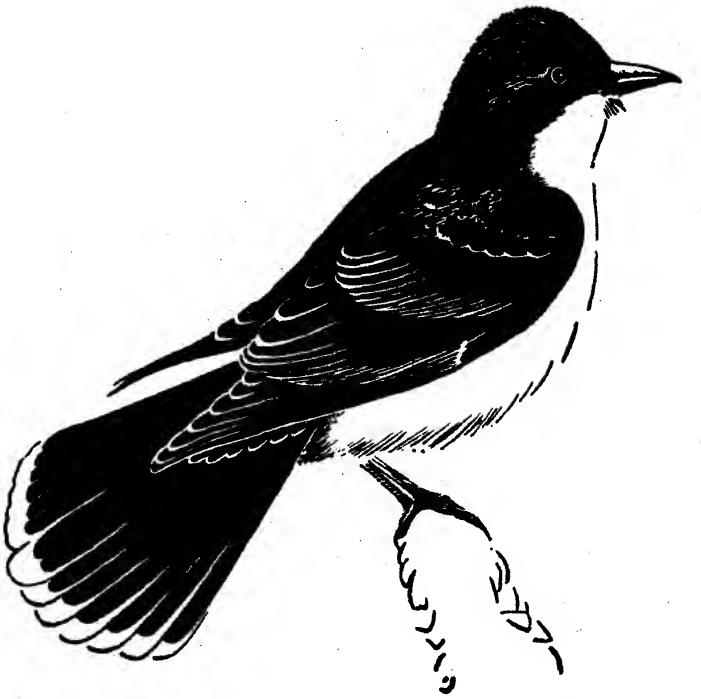

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Monday, June 21,1999
Dear Manny:

I read with great interest the recent report of the New York State Avian Records Committee (NYSARC) for 1995 (*The Kingbird* 48: 301-308). Of particular note, was the surprising rejection of records for Sandhill Crane *(Grus canadensis)* and Lark Sparrow *(Chondestes grammacus)* from the Bridgehampton, Long Island area in the late winter of 1995. Readers may remember that these birds occurred within a short distance from the very well-watched Northern Lapwing *(Vanellus vanellus)* and were seen by many birders, including at least one member of NYSARC! In fact, the lapwing was discovered by birders from Delaware who were searching for the crane, which had been reported on the New York City RBA. The purpose of this letter is not to contest the ruling on these submissions, but to ask why additional reports were not solicited by the committee and to make some general comments on the relationship between NYSARC and the birding community.

As I understand it, only one observer reported on these particular birds. I assume there was some problem with his/her write up but I am afraid we are no wiser from reading the bare bones annual report. Multiple submissions would most likely have ensured a different outcome. Doubtless this particular case reflects a natural tendency to assume that others will submit the reports and this is why a state rarity committee must take an active rather than passive role in the record gathering process. It is common practice in other states and most certainly in other countries, for rare bird committees to actively solicit details of rarities. For example, growing up in the UK, I was contacted on multiple occasions by the secretaries of both regional and national bodies requesting details of birds that required review. In an effort to plug obvious holes, the British birding literature often carries requests for descriptions of specific birds.

Overall, I think this issue highlights a serious problem in the relationship between NYSARC and the rank-and-file birding community in the state. This situation is borne out by the low submission rate (only 65 reports for 1995). Since first moving to New York in 1991, I have been troubled by the resounding lack of confidence in NYSARC within the local birding community and have heard few words of praise. My perception is that there are two main problems:

(1) Lack of feedback to individual contributors: According to the NYSARC Guidelines (*The Kingbird* 1998; 48:116-119) observers will be advised as to the acceptance or non-acceptance of their report using a form letter. Reasons for rejection will not be given as part of this notification and observers must write directly to the current committee chair. I believe this aloofness is guaranteed to create bad feelings. Observers are more likely to simply stop sending their reports than enter a somewhat intimidating correspondence. Again as a young birder in the UK, submissions were almost always followed up with note of thanks and in time, with details of acceptance/rejection. I recall tremendous pride in receiving a few lines from the Secretary of the British Birds Rarities Committee (a figure akin to God), informing me of their acceptance of my submissions. On one occasion, I was even informed that the committee was notably impressed by the quality of the write-up - a lasting source of encouragement to an anxious fifteen year old! Returning to the situation in New York, I am sure the committee can devise a small series of 'standard' letters, either congratulating the contributor or advising them in general terms what was wrong with their report. Where appropriate, specific details can be added to the letter. For example, that the ruling is supported by additional experts outside of the committee, that the description does not firmly eliminate a specific similar species or that the reported bird corresponds to a known escape. The observer may actually agree with these recommendations and I am certainly convinced that a few gentle words of explanation will do a lot to ease the anger and/or disappointment of rejection. If there is sufficient reason to reject a record then the committee should feel comfortable saying so. This responsibility comes with the territory.

(2) Lack of public justification of decisions: Reading the annual NYSARC report is an exercise in frustration and misses an excellent opportunity to educate birders on issues of identification, changing trends in the region's avifauna and how to prepare good reports. Take as a comparison, the equivalent reports from the California and Arizona Records committees published annually in *Western Birds*. Accepted records are accompanied by a sentence of two of pertinent information placing the record within the context of previous occurrences, relating the date to the normal timing of migration, mentioning that look-alike species were successfully eliminated and so on. Rejections are treated gracefully, often presenting sound reasoning behind the decision. For example, in rejecting three records of Painted Bunting *(Passerina ciris)*, the California committee confirms that the birds were correctly identified - thus saving face for the observer - but then goes on to explain that the

timing or location of all three records were inconsistent with the established pattern of vagrancy, suggestive of escaped cage birds. In addition to the records themselves, the specific comments and a few choice illustrations creates a fascinating report that is well worth the hard work required to generate it. We can only dream of the same in New York. Most importantly, the published justifications help readers to understand what is required for accurate identification of birds out of their normal range. For instance, I am sure many observers simply do not appreciate the level of detail that is required to safely identify many species nor the usefulness of recording vocalizations. *British Birds* has a long-standing tradition of publishing exemplary submissions of major rarities accompanied by an editorial from the records committee. These provide marvelous reading and an ideal template for those writing their own reports.

I would presume that NYSARC's mandate is to achieve as accurate a record of New York's avifauna as possible. Surely this noble aim warrants an aggressive and active dialogue with the region's field observers? I am confident such a move will result in a greater number of submissions and an overall increase in their quality.

Sincerely,

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THE WINTER SEASON 1998-99

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WEATHER EFFECTS

For most of the state it was a winter of extremes. Conditions were remarkably mild and dry throughout the season, except for a three-week stretch from late December to mid-January. Cold weather in this period and near constant snow in the January portion (Region 10 and the southern portion of Region 9 notwithstanding), produced some of the harshest weather birds ever have to deal with in New York. With deep snow cover, even Snow Buntings resorted to feeders in some locations and in Region 5, iced wings caused the demise of at least two Double-crested Cormorants with six others unable to fly. A Pine Warbler at minus 25° in Region 7 was not likely to have survived. Of course, what we see is usually only the tip of the iceberg and we can only speculate on the full extent of mortality. Many half-hardy species were not reported after mid-January, which is certainly not unusual in winter. Is mortality the reason or do birds retreat further south or is it simply that many birders hang up their binoculars until spring? I would guess "all of the above" and suggest that birders doing a "Big February" could add a lot of data to help us answer these questions.

HALF-HARDIES

It was another winter with impressive numbers and variety of half - hardies. For the second winter in a row a Prairie Warbler was found, this time in Region 1. This is only about the fourth record at this season. A Broad-winged Hawk in Region 4 is exceptional inland and should be verified to rule out Red-shouldered Hawk. A Spotted Sandpiper would be a great find anywhere at this season but in northern Region 7, it is extraordinary. In Region 8, a House Wren is one of very few away from coastal areas in winter, and an Osprey there is only slightly less unusual. In Region 9 a Scarlet Tanager would probably be the latest ever in the state but it must be kept in mind that both Western and Summer tanagers are more likely at this season. A Cattle Egret in Region 10 was one of the latest ever in the state. Also exceptional, even for the coastal Region were,

Piping Plover, Whimbrel, Caspian Tern and Blue-gray Gnatcatcher. Of the birds listed in this paragraph only the first three were recorded after December.

Found in three Regions or more were the following: Red-shouldered Hawk (four Regions), Virginia Rail (three), Common Snipe (three), Eastern Phoebe (three), Ruby-crowned Kinglet (seven!), American Pipit (three), Pine Warbler (three), Common Yellowthroat (five), Fox Sparrow (five), and Baltimore Oriole (three). Numerous other half-hardy species are sprinkled throughout the Regional reports.

MAJOR GROUPS

Waterfowl in general had a fine season, mentioned by several Regional Editors either for high numbers or good variety. Tundra Swans were found in five Regions with large numbers overwintering in Region 1. The first state record of Ross's Goose was in 1983 but the species is now nearly annual - one each was in Regions 2 & 3. Another prospering goose is the Greater White-fronted. Eleven in Region 1 was the second most ever and the largest winter concentration ever in New York. Normally not found in winter, Blue-winged Teal occurred in four Regions. Diving ducks were noted in large numbers in Regions 1, 2 & 3. Highlighting this group were Harlequin Ducks in four Regions, including an inland record maximum of five in Region 5, Barrow's Goldeneye in five Regions, Common Eider in Region 2, and Tufted Duck in Region 1.

Owls were a disappointment. Very few Snowy Owls turned up. The numbers of the other regular species were unimpressive, and none of the rare northern owls was found.

Although nobody reported especially large concentrations, with the possible exception of Region 10, gull variety was very good, with Lesser Black-backed, Iceland, and Glaucous found in almost every Region and Thayer's Gull reported in five. The situation with the latter species is problematical and possibly exacerbated to some extent by birders "routinely" identifying the species on the Niagara River. As many birders know, it is now widely, though not universally, believed that Thayer's and Iceland gulls interbreed extensively and that they should be lumped into a single species. Some birds, believed to be intergrades, can look almost exactly like a typical Thayer's Gull, differing by only a single subtle character. Thus, identification of a Thayer's Gull requires a long and careful study at fairly close range. For an excellent review by an author who believes in lumping the two species, see "Taxonomic History of Thayer's Gull" by Ron Pittaway (*Ontario Birds* Vol. 17, No. 1, pp. 2-13).

Smaller gulls of note included a Black-headed and a late Franklin's in Region 1, Black-legged Kittiwake in Regions 1, 5 & 10, and Laughing Gull in Region 10. A California Gull graced Region 2 for the second straight year.

After their first invasion in many years last winter, it was hoped that an echo flight of winter finches would follow this season. Disappointingly, that was not the case. In Region 7, where an influx of these birds would probably be felt first and foremost, American Goldfinch was the most abundant species, not the kind of finch birders were hoping for. What is interesting, however, is that Algonquin Provincial Park, less than 150 miles from New York, experienced an excellent mid-winter influx of winter finches with large numbers of White-winged Crossbill, Pine Siskin, Purple Finch, American Goldfinch, Common Redpoll, and Evening Grosbeak. Is a poor cone crop the reason we were spurned?

MISCELLANEOUS

No longer endangered in the state, it is great to see such healthy numbers of Bald Eagles reported this season in Regions 7, 8 & 9. Eastern New York would seem to be the winter stronghold of the species in our state. In several Regions Rough-legged Hawk numbers improved over recent years, and there was a fine late season count in Region 1. Unfortunately, without a Region 6 report, their status this winter in the Cape Vincent/Point Peninsula area stronghold is unknown. Probably due to the mild conditions Red-headed Woodpeckers overwintered in relatively high numbers with up to 10 at one site in Region 10. American Robins, staying through in large numbers in the mild winters of recent years, continued the practice this year with reports even coming from the higher elevations of Region 7. Two examples of unusual feeding behavior were noted: a Golden-crowned Kinglet eating suet and donut crumbs in Region 7 and a Carolina Wren caught in a mouse trap inside a garage in Region 5. Since cheese is not the only kind of bait used on mice, it would be interesting to know what was used here.

RARITIES

Except for the period from late December to mid-January it was an easy winter to be afield and the rewards were many. Pretty much annual in winter, Varied Thrush was found in Regions 1 & 7. It strikes me as odd that this species, which has a fairly restricted winter range in the far

western states and British Columbia, should occur with such frequency so far east. And unlike other regular western and mid-western strays such as Western Kingbird, Lark Sparrow, and Dickcissel, the Varied Thrush does not usually end up at the coast. Sandhill Cranes are occurring more frequently in seasons other than spring with Regions 1, 2, 3 & 10 reports this season. Northern Gannets were moving around Lake Ontario and were picked out in Regions 1 & 2. Parasitic Jaegers lingered in Regions 1 & 7, the latter location away from a Great Lake being particularly unusual. Eurasian Wigeon was found in Regions 8 & 9 and considered "numerous" in Region 10. Late shorebirds included Black-bellied Plover, Pectoral Sandpiper, and Dunlin in Region 2, Greater Yellowlegs and Common Snipe in Region 8, and a rare Red Phalarope in Region 10. The really unusual warblers were found in the milder Regions 9 & 10. These included Palm and Orange-crowned warblers, Ovenbird, and Yellow-breasted Chat in Region 9 and Nashville Warbler and Northern Waterthrush in Region 10.

In Region 3 a King Eider was a rare find away from the coast and Great Lakes while a Yellow-headed Blackbird was a rare find, period. A Western Tanager was a first record for Region 4 while the state's first Anna's Hummingbird was a holdover from late fall. It was speculated that the Yellow-billed Loon in Region 5 might be the same individual which spent a few weeks on Lake Ontario last winter. Regardless, it should be considered the third state record. Although the loon did not return to Oswego Harbor, two Great Cormorants did. A Savannah Sparrow was a good find in Region 8, while Sora and Rose-breasted Grosbeak were reported in Region 9. With three chances in three locations, those who missed the Mountain Bluebirds in Region 9 must really be feeling blue. This is an unprecedented number for a season. In Region 10, Eared Grebe, White-eyed Vireo, and Brewer's Blackbird were found. Two "Black" Brant provided a second report in as many winters for Region 10 while a "Eurasian" Green-winged Teal and a Mew Gull (also known as Common Gull, *Larus canus canus*) made for a banner season for larids on the coast. The gull was in first-basic plumage, an extremely difficult field identification challenge but from photos and discussion on the internet, it appears to be correct.

Again, there were many outstanding rarities and half-hardies found this season, several of which would vie for the Bird-of-the-Season award in a typical winter. However, I have to go with yet another first state record, a Black-tailed Gull in Region 10. For the full account of this sighting see Wilson ,A. and Guthrie, A. in *The Kingbird* (49:2-7).

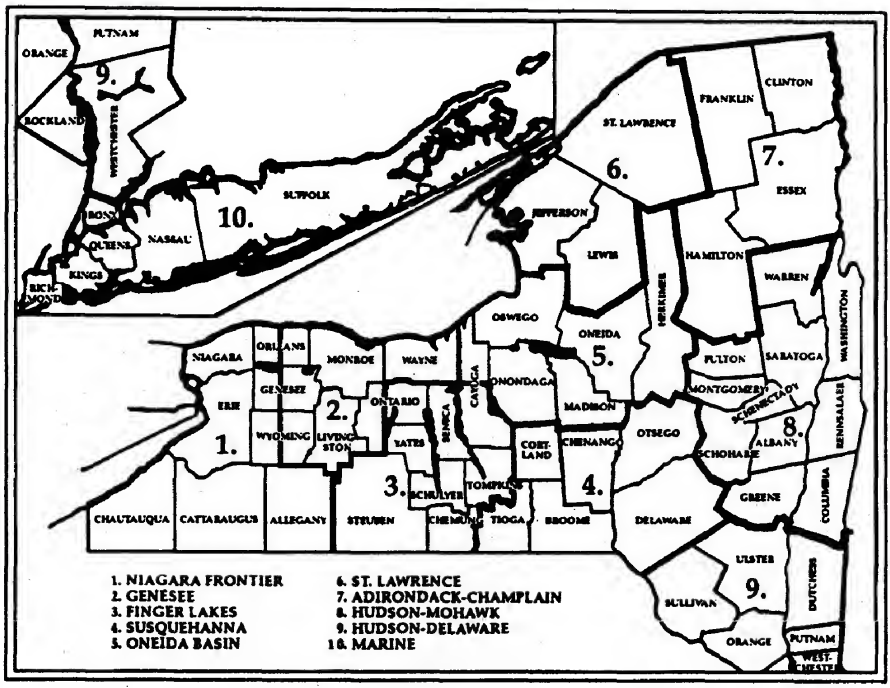
STANDARD ABBREVIATIONS

Regional rarities appear in **BOLD UPPERCASE**; county names are shortened to their first four letters and appear in UPPER CASE letters; months are shortened to their first three letters. **In species accounts**: number of individuals omitted implies that one individual was reported; ! — details seen by Regional Editor; ad — adult; Alt — Alternate plumage; Am. — American; arr — arrival or first of season; BBS — Breeding Bird Survey; BOTS — bird of the season; CBC — Christmas Bird Count; CO — confirmed nesting; Com. — Common; E. — Eastern; FL — fledgling; FY — adult feeding young; I — Island; imm — immature; *intro* — see introduction to report; juv — juvenile; L — Lake; max — maximum; mob — multiple observers; N. — Northern; NYSDEC — New York State Department of Environmental Conservation; NWR — National Wildlife Refuge; NYSARC — report to New York State Avian Records Committee; P — Park; Pd — Pond; ph — photographed; Pt — Point; Res — Reservoir; SP — State Park; spm — specimen; subad — subadult; T — Town of; Twn — township;W. — Western; WMA — Wildlife Management Area; y — young.

REPORTING DEADLINES

Winter Season: December, January, February
Deadline is 7 March
Spring Season: March, April, May
Deadline is 7 June
Summer Season: June, July, August
Deadline is 7 September
Fall Season: September, October, November
Deadline is 7 December

REPORTING REGIONS



Regional boundaries coincide with county lines, *except* at:

Region 1-Region 2 in Orleans, Genesee and Wyoming Counties: the boundary is NY Route 98 from Pt. Breeze to Batavia, NY Route 63 from Batavia to Pavilion, and NY Route 19 from Pavilion to the Allegany County line.

Region 2-Region 3 in Ontario County: the boundary is Mud Creek to NY Route 64, NY Route 64 from Bristol Center to S. Bristol Springs, and Route 21 from S. Bristol Springs to the Yates County line.

Region 3-Region 5 in Cayuga County: the boundary is NY Route 31.

INVITING NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS

Readers are invited to submit short pieces of interesting sightings, observations or incidents, etc., that do not require full-blown article treatment. No bibliography is necessary unless the author wishes to submit one. If a photograph is included, we require either a black-and-white glossy print or a color negative which we will convert to a b&w print. If the editor believes the note should be expanded to a full article, you will be invited to do so.

REGION 1- NIAGARA FRONTIER

Dick Miga
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The 1998-1999 Winter season was another strange one indeed for all of western New York. The total season snowfall was actually normal or slightly above over all areas, but this masked the fact that the bulk of winter was actually quite mild and open. There was, however, one period of severe winter weather during the first two weeks of January.

Winter began very late, as the mild, dry conditions of autumn lingered into December. Conditions changed over the holidays, when colder air crossed over Lake Erie creating the well known lake-effect snow conditions. Winter really roared into the area in early January when severe lake snows struck the areas east and northeast of the lakes. These storms were followed by general snowfalls as low pressure systems moved in and stalled during the second week of the month. Most areas had more snow on the ground by the 15th of January than at any time in the last 22 years. This combination of lake-effect and synoptic storms gave the Buffalo region the third snowiest January ever.

The pattern changed abruptly in mid-January though, and mild conditions returned and continued right through the month of February. In summary, the western region of the state fared better than the east end of the Lake Ontario region, where over 300" of snow was recorded. In the western New York area, the highest amounts were recorded over the ridges of Chautauqua County with 170", while the Buffalo area and surroundings recorded 80-90 inches and 120 inches, respectively.

Monthly significant statistics were as follows: December had major snows of up to 10" near Perrysburg and a foot south of Buffalo on the 31st. The average temperature for the Region was 35.3° F, over six degrees above normal and the third warmest December in 55 years of record keeping. Precipitation totaled only 1.54 inches, making the month the driest in 55 years. Sunshine totaled 34 percent of possible daylight.

January roared into our Region, as previously mentioned, with some of the most severe winter weather in many years. However, when the month ended the data showed that January had normal temperatures, but was also the sixth wettest and third snowiest in 115 year of meteorological data. While the average temperature was 0.1° below normal, the month was actually marked by extremes between the first half and second half. The heavy snows and consequent melt created some of the

worst destructive flooding conditions in 40 years in some locales in the Region. Lake Erie remained partially free of ice cover, particularly in the eastern basin near Buffalo. Sunshine prevailed for only 7 percent of available daylight.

Finally, February provided a drastic turnaround for the Region. Mild conditions prevailed for most of the month. Temperatures averaged 31.0°F, 6.5° above normal, making it the tenth warmest February in 129 years. The only cold spell occurred between February 19th and the 23rd. With 1.1 inches of precipitation, it was he eighth driest in that same 129 year period. Sunshine occurred for 43% of the possible daylight hours.

Avian activity received considerable attention in the press as well as from the general public, as many people remarked about the unusual sightings of what are normally considered summer birds, such as robins and bluebirds, throughout the period. This provided many opportunities for local birders to seize the moment and relate to their non-birding friends about the wonders of birding and the "whys" of natural phenomena. For those more aware of such conditions, the period brought many rewarding sightings to our area.

Significant reports for the period included **Franklin's Gulls**, which began their invasion in fall and lingered into the winter period. Sightings of one or two birds were reported from the beginning of the December through the 13th,from the Whirlpool area of the Niagara River. The Niagara River Corridor, identified as an Important Birding Area (IBA) by the National Audubon Society, continues to be one of the leading producers of wintering larids. Thirteen species were recorded during this period, highlighted by a possible "Nelson's"Gull (Herring X Glaucous hybrid) observed on December 13 and 26. From the Lake Ontario region near the Town of Porter, an immature **Northern Gannet** was sighted on 27 December by Willie D'Anna. Another oceanic species, the Parasitic Jaeger, that was reported in the fall report, remained in the Dunkirk Harbor through the 4th of December. This bird was observed by many and videotaped by your editor at very close range while it sat on a dock 20 feet from the car.

A **Greater White-fronted Goose** sighted by Bill Bogacki on December 23 at the Tifft Farms Nature Preserve west of Buffalo and a **Sandhill Crane** reported by Bruce Chilton on December 11 in the Town of Wilson in Niagara County added a touch of excitement to the Region. A touch of spring was added to the winter season with the sighting of a **Prairie Warbler** at Buckhorn Island State Park on Grand Island near Buffalo. This bird was reported by Peter Yoerg on the 6th of December, and observed again by David Suggs and Willie D'Anna on the 13th an 14th of that

month. This is a first known winter record for this Region. The month of December concluded with the annual Christmas Bird Counts. Jim Landau serves as compiler for this important event and reported the following species at high counts for the last nine years: Double-crested Cormorant, Canada Goose, Tundra Swan, Mallard, Green-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, Northern Pintail, Hooded Merganser, American Coot, American Robin, Yellow-rumped Warbler, and Red-winged Blackbird. At a low for the period was House Finch at 1901, continuing a steady decline. Additional noteworthy reports were Northern Gannet at Niagara Falls, 11 Greater White-fronted Goose at Oak Orchard, and Prairie Warbler in Buffalo.

The month of January started out somewhat disastrous for overwintering birds due to the previously mentioned snowstorm. An example was an **American Woodcock** found frozen on the morning of 4 January. This bird was the first January record for the Buffalo Ornithological Society study area, though actually found in Fort Erie, Ontario. Numerous accounts of other frozen or incapacitated birds were reported, some even noted in the *Buffalo Evening News.*

Feeding stations were in demand, bringing expectations of rarities. A **Varied Thrush** appeared at the Alden home of James Bottlinger. This bird is the 13th record in this area since 1970. Other significant records reported during this first month of the year occurred in the open water areas of the Great Lakes, with estimates of waterfowl running as high as 50,000, mostly Greater Scaup and Common Merganser, but with an occasional rare visitor expected. Mike Morgante found just such a bird with the sighting of a **Tufted Duck.** The bird remained in the area for about two weeks and was observed by many birders on both sides of the US and Canada border. Local experts are considering this a "wild" bird, citing the increase in Zebra Mussels in the Region as an attractant since this appears to be one of it's natural foods.

The final month of the winter season brought a **Black-headed Gull** for most of the period. This bird first appeared on January 30 in the Niagara River near Lewiston NY and was sighted through the 21st of February. Swans seemed to be the bird of the period, as counts were reported in excess of 300 birds from various locations throughout Region 1. Of particular note were the six tagged Trumpeter Swans that were released in the Barcelona Harbor near Westfield NY. These birds were raised in Ontario as a part of the Trumpeter program currently in operation throughout the northeastern United States and Canada.

Barcelona Harbor also provided a female **Harlequin Duck,** sighted first by Gil Randall and observed by many from the last day of January

through 7 February. The winter of 1998-1999 also produced good counts of some winter species, such as the 42 Rough-legged Hawks observed by David Neveau in the South Dayton area of the Cattaraugus/Chautauqua border, a total which had local experts checking area maxima.

Finally, early migrant movements were evident in the latter part of the season, highlighted by *icterid* flights and Short-eared Owls frequenting the Dunkirk NY airport in late February and into March.

In concluding this report, I would like to offer a special thank you to Dick Rosche, an old birding friend and current reporter for the *Prothonotary*, the official publication of the Buffalo Ornithological Society for providing me with records and data from that organization.

CONTRIBUTORS

Robert Andrle, William Bogacki, Bill Burch, Bruce Chilton, Willie D'Anna, Kurt Fox, Paul Hess, Brenda Klick, Mike Morgante, Terry Mosher, David Neveau, Tom O'Donnell, Susan O'Donnell, Vivian Pitzrick, Gil Randall, Frances Rew, Gerald Rising, Richard Rosche, Dorothy Rosche, Gail Seamans, David Suggs (Buffalo RBA), William Watson, Peter Yoerg.

ABBREVIATIONS

BuSP - Buckhorn Island State Park - Grand Island; FMSCP - Four Mile Creek State Park - NIAG: FNSP - Fort Niagara State Park- NIAG; Tifft NP - Tifft Nature Preserve, Buffalo.

LOONS - DUCKS

Red-Throated Loon: 2 T Porter NIAG 27 Dec (MM etal); arr 2 GHSP 27 Feb (WD).
NORTHERN GANNET: 1 FMSCP 27 Dec (WD).
Double-crested Cormorant: 45 primarily Niagara Falls CBC data, nine year high.
Black-crowned Night-Heron: arr 2 Buffalo 27 Feb (PY).
Turkey Vulture: arr 1 Hamburg ERIE 21 Feb (RA).
GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE: 1 Tifft NP 23 Dec (WB).
Canada Goose: 20517 Oak Orchard WMA GENE CBC data, nine year high.
TRUMPETER SWAN: 6 banded (wing tag & leg) Barcelona Harbor CHAU birds observed and videotaped by several observers during month of January & early February. (Exotic)
Tundra Swan: 122 CBC data, nine year high.
Wood Duck: arr 4 T Pomfret CHAU 28 Feb (TeM).
Mallard: 7920 CBC data, nine year high.
N. Shoveler: 25 Jamestown area CBC data, nine year high.
N. Pintail: arr 4 T Pomfret CHAU 5 Feb (PY); 1620 mainly Oak Orchard WMA CBC data, nine year high.
Green-winged Teal: 17 CBC data, nine year high.

TUFTED DUCK: 1 Niagara River bird observed from both(MM!). sides of river by several observers
HARLEQUIN DUCK: 1 Barcelona Harbor CHAU 30 Jan - 7 Feb (GR).
Black Scoter: 1 Silver Creek CHAU *5* Feb (WW!).
Hooded Merganser: 1661 Jamestown primarily CBC data, nine year high..
Ruddy Duck: 1 Tonawanda ERIE *19* Feb (WW).

HAWKS - ALCIDS

N. Goshawk: 1 Wethersfield Springs WYOM 27 Dec (RR! et al); 1 T Porter NIAG 6 Feb (SO!).
Red-Shouldered Hawk: arr 1 Grand Island 26 Feb (R&DR), early.
Rough-legged Hawk: 42 South Dayton CATT/CHAU 18 Feb (DN).
Merlin: 1 Buffalo 21,29 Dec (DS!,BK!); 1 Buffalo 23 Jan (BK!); 1 T Yates ORLE 31 Jan (WD!,MM!); 1&2 birds observed on University of Buffalo Campus 1 Feb through 26 Feb (mob).
Peregrine Falcon: 1 Amherst ERIE 21 Jan (BB!); 1 Buffalo Harbor 31 Jan (FR!); nesting pair Statler Building Buffalo 1 - 26 Feb (BB!).
SANDHILL CRANE: 1 T Wilson NIAG 11 Dec (BC!).
Am. Coot: 1955 Niagara Falls primarily CBC data, nine year high.
Killdeer: arr Fredonia CHAU 20 Feb (TeM).
Purple Sandpiper: 1 Niagara Falls *7* Feb (PY,?S).
Parasitic Jaeger: 1 Dunkirk Harbor CHAU 1-4 Dec (mob).
Franklin's Gull: 1&2 birds observed in the Whirlpool area of the Niagara River from 5 Dec - 13 Dec (WD!,MM!,BK!).
BLACK-HEADED GULL: 1 Niagara Falls 5 Dec (PH!).

PIGEONS - WOODPECKERS

Short-Eared Owl: 6 Dunkirk Airport CHAU observed for several weeks Feb.

FLYCATCHERS - WAXWINGS

Ruby-Crowned Kinglet: 1 Grand Island 5 Dec (SO!).
Am. Robin: 2413 primarily Niagara Falls CBC data, nine year high.
VARIED THRUSH: 1 Alden ERIE 28,30 Jan (GS!,KF!); 1 Alden ERIE 1 Feb (GR!).
Am. Pipit: 1 Tifft NP 18 Dec (BB!).

WARBLERS

Yellow-rumped Warbler: 49 primarily Buffalo CBC data, nine year high.
PRAIRIE WARBLER: 1 BuSP observed from 6 Dec -14 Dec (PY!,DS!,WD!), 1st Regional winter record.

TANAGERS - WEAVERS

Fox Sparrow: 1 BuSP 6,7 Dec (PY!,BC!);1 Eden Valley (feeder) ERIE 18 Dec (RA!).
Red-winged Blackbird: 244 Oak Orchard WMA, nine year high.
House Finch: 1901 CBC summary, low.

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REGION 2 - GENESEE

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It was a winter of contrasts. December started off rather warm with the bulk of the month averaging temperatures about 5.0° above normal at 34.6°F. Nearly the first two -thirds of the month were 10° above normal. It wasn't until the last ten days that we had any cold weather to speak of and temperatures averaged about 3° below normal. Precipitation was a paltry 1.6" with only 10.1" of snowfall. This last total was nearly a foot below normal and the least amount in the last 45 years. Generally speaking water was open and the ground bare.

Things changed in January. The first half of the month saw an average temperature of only 15°F, while the second half reached a balmy 30° average. The overall monthly average then was only 0.8° below normal. The snow picture changed drastically with a total of 48.8". This figure was quite near double the normal amount and produced the third snowiest January on record. Overall precipitation was 1.83" above normal at 3.91". The cold spell froze the ponds and smaller lakes, but the second half thaw produced bare ground once again.

February was generally mild with a 30.6°F average. This was a full 6.0° above normal. Precipitation was 1.41" below normal, as it totaled a mere 0.69". Snowfall was only 4.7", which was about a foot and a half below normal. Except for the brutal stretch of snow in January, it was a pretty easy winter weatherwise.

Birding along the lake and waterbirds in general were the only real highlights of the season. Loons and grebes were generally in typical to slightly above average numbers. The **Northern Gannet** reports in January were unusual. Double-crested Cormorants were about average to a little above during the open water periods. Waterfowl and gulls kept things interesting. **Ross's Goose** and **Greater White-fronted Goose** late in the season were exceptional. King Eider numbers were quite good, and a **Common Eider** at Sodus Bay through much of the season was a real bonus. Canada Geese continued to winter in good numbers. Unfortunately, so did the Mute Swans. The general feeling is that they are out of control here. On the positive side were good totals for diving ducks including Hooded Merganser. The only puddle duck note of interest was the absence of Wood Duck.

Hawk numbers for the most part were about average. Of note were periodic spikes in numbers of Rough-legged Hawks. During the January snowy spell numbers seemed to pick up. This featured a predominance of immature birds. Later in the season the adults were more numerous. A continuing trend was the good number of winter Merlin sightings.

Late December brought reports of a **Sandhill Crane** feeding in a corn field in Greece. The cold and snowy spell in January ended the reports of this bird. Shorebirds aren't typically a major topic in winter, and for the most part that was true this year. So of special note were a Black-bellied Plover on the Rochester CBC, a first for the count; a Purple Sandpiper in January; an unusually late **Pectoral Sandpiper** at Braddock Bay in early December; and the Dunlin found on 24 December. Killdeer and Common Snipe reports are more typical for the season, but the 13 snipe on the 20th at Braddock Bay was by far a record total for the CBC.

California Gull was reported again this winter. **Thayer's Gull** and **Lesser Black-backed Gull** continue to be reported on a more regular basis. Little Gull and Bonaparte's Gulls were present in numbers typical of recent years. White-winged gull reports were slightly less numerous than in recent years.

Short-eared Owls were about average, but Snowy Owl was essentially absent with at only one report. A Long-eared Owl in a suburban Greece backyard in January was unusual.

Land birding was not very excitng this year. There was no major push by area birders to amass a"Big January"list, so the search for half- hardies and passerines was less intense than in the past several years. This was in addition to the heavy snows of the first half of the month which curtailed birding and certainly negatively impacted lingering half- hardies. A hummingbird on the Rochester CBC was a super find; unfortunately not identified to species and not relocated later. On the plus side were good numbers of Carolina Wrens and Northern Mockingbirds. There were some big counts of American Robins. White-crowned Sparrows were found in good numbers in a few select locations, a continuing trend of recent years.

On the down side was a scarcity of Hermit Thrushes, only one report of Bohemian Waxwing, few sightings of Yellow-rumped Warbler, and only a smattering of sparrow reports. Blackbird reports were fairly good early in the season but dropped off somewhat until the return or early migrants late in the season. Winter finches were nearly absent, with relatively few reports of any species.

The three regional Christmas Bird Counts were pretty good this year. The Conesus-Hemlock (Little Lakes) Count recorded a record high 87

species. The Rochester Count tallied 92 species, and the Letchworth-Silver Lake Count totaled 75 species. These totals were all at the high average end.

The annual Federation Waterfowl Count was conducted in January. The species count of 29 was just slightly above the average for the last ten years. Wintry conditions made observations difficult and kept counts for individual species low for the most part.

ABBREVIATIONS

A - Avon, BB - Braddock Bay, CH - Charlotte(Ontario Beach), CL - Conesus Lake, DE - Durand-Eastman Park, G - Greece, GA - Galen (Wayne Co), HB - Hamlin Beach Lakewatch, HL - Hemlock Lake, HO - Honoeye Lake, IB - Irondequoit Bay, LSL - Letchworth-Silver Lake, LL-Little Lakes , NR - Nations Road, P - Perinton, R - Rochester, RS- Russell Station (Greece), SP - Sodus Point, W - Webster.

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LOONS-DUCKS

Red-throated Loon: max 666 HB 12 Dec.
Horned Grebe: max 114 HB 4 Feb (WS), good total.
Red-necked Grebe: max 78 HB 19 Dec; 1 LLCBC 27 Dec, 1st ever on the count; arr 3 HB 2 Feb.
N. Gannet: 1 HB 7 Dec (GA,WS); 1 HB 9 Dec (GA,WS); 1 HB 14 Dec (GA), good total for Dec.
Double-crested Cormorant: max 90 W 23 Dec.
Great Blue Heron: max 8 G 19 Dec.
Turkey Vulture: max 1 BB 17,27 Feb .
Greater White-fronted Goose: 1 Savannah (Wayne Co)19 Feb (DT,MD); 1 BB 28 Feb (DT).
Snow Goose: 4-5 Gates 1-14 Dec; max 56 CL 6 Dec; 1 Silver Lake 2 Jan..
ROSS'S GOOSE: 1 Geneseo 21 Dec (JF), 3rd Regional record .
Brant: 1 BB 10,11,17 Feb; 1 HB 16 Feb..
Mute Swan: max 100 RCBC 20 Dec.
Trumpeter Swan: max 6 IB 16 Jan.

Wood Duck: last 1 G 6 Dec; arr 1 HB 15 Feb.
Blue-winged Teal: last 2 BB 20 Dec.
N. Shoveler: 1 CL 2 Jan, uncommon.
Green-winged Teal: max 4 Caledonia 5 Jan.
Redhead: max 3400 CL 20 Feb.
Ring-necked Duck: max 326 LLCBC 27 Dec.
Greater Scaup: 7081 HB 20 Dec.
King Eider: 1 male HB 13 Dec (WS); 1 female HB 14 Dec (GA); 1 female HB 15 Dec (GA,BE); 2 female HB 20 Dec (GA); 1 female W 2 Jan (DT,MD); 2 SP 16 Jan (DT,MD); 1 fem, 1 imm male; 1 imm male HB 26 Jan (WS); 1 subad male HB 27 Jan (WS); 1 fem SP thru 28 Feb; 1 imm male SP 9 Feb (DT,MD); 2 subad males HB 3 Feb (WS).
COMMON EIDER: 1 female SP 16 Jan - 25 Feb (DT,MD,KF,RS).
Harlequin Duck: 1 female HB 9 Dec (GA).
White-winged Scoter: max 7324 HB 14 Dec.
Oldsquaw: max 5000+ W 17 Jan.
Hooded Merganser: max 461 LLCBC 27 Dec.
Ruddy Duck: max 30 Lake Leroy (Perry) 19 Dec.

HAWKS-ALCIDS

N. Goshawk: 1 P 16 Jan; 1 G 17 Feb, only reports.
Merlin: 1 A 2 Jan; 1 P 13 Jan; 1 NR 17 Jan; 1 DE 23 Jan; 1 BB 28 Feb, good total.
Virginia Rail: 2 Penfield 20 Dec; 1 G 20 Dec, uncommon in winter.
Sandhill Crane: 1 imm HB 3 Dec (RMc, RO'H); 1 BB 16 Dec (BE); 1 G 26-31 Dec (mob).
Black-bellied Plover: 1 BB 6,20 Dec (DS,R,S&CS), first for RCBC.
Killdeer: max 16 BB 20 Dec, scattered reports in Jan..
PECTORAL SANDPIPER: last 1 BB 6 Dec.
Purple Sandpiper: 1 HB 13 Dec (CC,WS); 1 RS 1-12 Jan (MD,DT, mob).
Dunlin: last 6 BB 24 Dec.
Com. Snipe: max 13 BB 20 Dec; last 4 CL 27 Dec; 1 HL 27 Dec.
Little Gull: 1 G 7 Feb (KG), uncommon.
Bonaparte's Gull: max 20,000+ CH 30 Dec (R,S&CS), good total for Dec.
CALIFORNIA GULL: 1 Point Breeze 17 Jan (DT,MD), second year in a row for the Region.
THAYER'S GULL: 1 ad W 5 Jan (DT); 1 1st yr P 16 Jan (DS); 1 1st yr IB 30 Jan (KG).
Lesser Black-backed Gull: 1 ad P 5 Dec (DS); 1 CL 13 Dec (KF); 2 ad P 16 Jan (DT,MD); 1 ad IB 16 Jan (MD,DT); 1 ad Summerville 24 Jan (mob); 1 ad HB 27 Jan (WS); 1 ad CH 30 Jan (KG); 1 ad IB 30 Jan (GC).

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS

E Screech-Owl: max 50 HO 27 Dec, excellent total.
Barred Owl: 1 Castille 20 Feb (JK), only report.
Long-eared Owl: 1 G 10 Jan (KG), only report.
hummingbird species: 1 W 20 Dec(LG).

FLYCATCHERS-WAXWINGS

Com. Raven: 1 BB 27 Feb (DT), only report.
Tree Swallow: last 1 HB 3 Dec.
Ruby-crowned Kinglet: 2 CL 27 Dec (MD,DT), late.
Hermit Thrush: 1 DE 18 Jan, scarce this year.
Am. Robin: est 10,000+ Mendon Ponds 10 Jan.
Brown Thrasher: 1 CL 27 Dec, late.
Bohemian Waxwing: 1 Hamlin 17 Jan (DT), only report.

WARBLERS

Com. Yellowthroat: 1 CL 27 Dec (DT,MD).

TANAGERS-WEAVERS

E. Towhee: 1 HL 27 Dec, late.
Chipping Sparrow: last 1 Clarkson 1-14 Dec.
Field Sparrow: 2 CL 27 Dec; 1 NR 5 Jan.
Swamp Sparrow: max 27 LLCBC 27 Dec.
Red-winged Blackbird: max 10,000 GA

18 Feb (DT,MD)
Com. Grackle: max 750 GA 18 Feb (DT,MD).
Brown-headed Cowbird: max 200 GA 18 Feb (DT,MD).

Pine Siskin: 20 DE 18 Jan, only report.
Evening Grosbeak: 3 Rattlesnake Hill WMA 20 Feb, only report.

REGION 3 - FINGER LAKES REGION

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Overall, winter 1998-99 was warmer than normal, with average temperatures for December 6.3°F warmer than normal, January 1.2° warmer than normal, and February 5.5° warmer than normal. The first three weeks of December were 10.5° warmer than normal. Record highs were set on 2, 6, and 7 December and tied 4 December with temperatures in the 60s. This period, however, was followed by a three week period that was several degrees colder than normal resulting in widespread freezing of ponds and marshes. This was the period in which most of the Christmas Bird Counts and the Federation Waterfowl Count were held. Precipitation was well below normal in December and February, but well above normal in January when 23.9 inches of snow fell and all but five days had a measurable snow cover.

The early winter warm spell may have influenced water birds to linger through the winter. Nearly all species of ducks showed increases over last year, as did grebes, cormorants, coots, and most gull species. Bald Eagles were reported from several sites away from Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge. Several Killdeer lingered through December. Several species of water birds were reported this winter that were not reported at all last year: eleven duck species, two gull species, Sandhill Crane, Dunlin, and Am. Pipit. In contrast, Am. Black Duck, Com. Goldeneye, and Herring Gull reports declined. Snow Geese and Canada Geese were reported in numbers far less than the previous winter.

In addition to the increase in Bald Eagles, N. Goshawks and Rough-legged Hawks also increased over last year. Most other raptors showed little change, Red-tailed Hawks appeared to be down in numbers.

Some woodland species: such as Downy Woodpecker, Blue Jay, and Red-breasted Nuthatch showed declines from last year. Pileated Woodpeckers were very scarce. Golden-crowned Kinglets increased dramatically from last year.

Open field birds such as Horned Larks, Lapland Longspurs, and Snow Buntings were reported in much higher numbers than last year. This may be due in part to the persistent snow cover in January, which helped to concentrate these birds in manured fields and made them easy for birders to locate.

Songbird species lingering in significantly greater numbers were E. Bluebird, Am. Robin, Cedar Waxwing, and Yellow-rumped Warbler. Several Ruby-crowned Kinglets and Hermit Thrushes were reported as well. White-throated Sparrows were relatively scarce. Red-wnged and Rusty blackbirds, and Brown-headed Cowbirds were also present in larger numbers, but Com. Grackles were fewer this winter. N. Shrikes, nearly absent the previous winter, were reported from many locations this winter. Am. Tree Sparrows decreased. Winter finches were virtually absent, with only three individual Evening Grosbeaks reported. Purple Finches were up. Am. Goldfinches were down. Southern species - Tufted Titmouse, N. Mockingbird, Carolina Wren, and N. Cardinal—showed no change. Intorduced species - Rock Dove, European Starling, House Finch, and House Sparrow—were all reported in lower numbers.

The season featured many rarities. Geneva hosted **Greater White-fronted Goose, Black Scoter,** and **Peregrine Falcon,** as well as the **Barrow's Goldeneye** which returned to spend its second winter there. Montezuma NWR and vicinity produced early winter records of **Ross's Goose, Blue-winged Teal,** and **Sandhill Crane.** The Montezuma CBC included a **Thayer's Gull** report. The detailed description will undergo NYSARC scrutiny. **King Eider,** White-winged Scoter, **Golden Eagle,** and **Yellow-headed Blackbird** appeared in the Cayuga Lake Basin. The Chemung Valley hosted several American Pipits and produced a mid-winter report of **Golden Eagle.**

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

CaL - Cayuga Lake, Cana - Canandaigua, CLB - Cayuga Lake Basin, CLSP - Cayuga Lake State Park, CLWC - Cayuga Lake Waterfowl Count, CLSWMA - Cayuga Lake State Wildlife Management Area, GCBC - Geneva Christmas Bird Count, HoHo - Hog Hole TOMP, ICBC - Ithaca Christmas Bird Count, KHAMO - Kestrel Haven Avian Migration Observatory SCHU, LPSP - Long Point State Park, MTSP - Mark Twain State Park, MCBC - Montezuma Christmas Bird Count, MNWR - Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge, MyPt - Myer's Point TOMP, SaMu - Savannah Mucklands SENE, SeL - Seneca Lake, SLSP - Seneca Lake State Park, SML - Seneca Meadows Landfill SENE, TCAH - The Center at Horseheads CHEM, BiFl - Big Flats, Cana - Canandaigua, Hors - Horseheads, Sout - Southport, Vet - Veteran CHEM, WCBC - Watkins Glen Christmas Bird Count, WDan - West Danby.

LOONS-DUCKS

Com. Loon: max 3 MyPt 6 Dec.
Pied-billed Grebe: max 8 ICBC.
Horned Grebe: max 7 Aurora Bay 8 Dec.
Red-necked Grebe: 1 SeL 31 Jan; 1 SeL 4 Feb, only reports.
Double-crested Cormorant: max 4 MyPt 14 Jan (MMe J&KMc), high; 2 Dresden thru.
Great Blue Heron: max 34 MNWR 15 Dec (G&JHO), high.
Turkey Vulture: arr 1 Ovid 3 Feb (MJT), very early; 1 Dryden 11 Feb; 1 Danby 11 Feb; 1 KHAMO 12 Feb; 1 Reading 20 Feb; 1 Covert 22 Feb; 1 Elmira 24 Feb; all early.
GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE: SLSP 13 Feb (CR CSa FB).
Snow Goose: max 300-400 MNWR 15 Dec; 3 ICBC record high; arr 300 Frontenac Pt SENE 26 Feb.
ROSS'S GOOSE: 1SaMu 15 Dec (GPh).
Canada Goose: max 31,578 CLWC 16 Jan.
Mute Swan: max 4 CLB 15 Dec; 4 MyPt 25 Jan; 1 ICBC, first record.

Tundra Swan: max >700 MNWR 15 Dec (MY), high; 21 ICBC, record high.
Trumpeter Swan: max 6 Seneca Falls 15 Feb (J&SGg), high; 4 Tyre 15 Dec.
Wood Duck: max 4 CaL 14 Feb.
Gadwall: max 36 CLWC 16 Jan, high; many reports, normally rare.
Am. Wigeon: max 15 CLSP 15 Dec; several reports, normally rare.
Am. Black Duck: max 1609 CLWC.
Mallard: max 2001 CLB 15 Dec; 680 ECBC, record high.
BLUE-WINGED TEAL: 1 SaMu 15 Dec (MY), late.
N. Shoveler: max 60 CLB 15 Dec (MY), high; last 1 CLB 22 Dec.
N. Pintail: max 51 Tyre 1 Dec (MY), high; 1 ECBC, third record; many reports, normally rare.
Green-winged Teal: max 25 SaMu 15 Dec (MY), high; 4 Union Springs 16 Jan; 2 TCAH 28 Jan; 1 WCBC, first record; several individual reports; normally rare.
Canvasback: max 701 CLB 15 Dec.
Redhead: max thousands HoHo 31 Jan; 146 WBCBC, record high.
Ring-necked Duck: max 38 CaL 22 Feb (JK); 12 ICBC, record high; 1 ECBC, third record; several reports; rare.
Scaup sp.: max thousands HoHo 31 Jan (JMc KK), high.
Greater Scaup: max 30 HoHo 16 Jan.
Lesser Scaup: max 31 HoHo 16 Jan; numerous reports, normally rare.
KING EIDER; 1 MyPt 13 Jan-6 Feb (CTH mob).
White-winged Scoter: 1 CaL 15 Dec (MY).
Black Scoter: 1 GCBC, only report.
Oldsquaw: max 3 Dryden L 8 Dec; 1 ICBC, second record.
Bufflehead: max 301 CaL 8 Dec (MY), high.
Com. Goldeneye: max 103 CLWC 16 Jan.
BARROW'S GOLDENEYE: 1 SLSP after 20 Dec (EBS mob).
Hooded Merganser: max 101 CLB 15 Dec (MY), high; 6 ECBC, record high.
Com. Merganser: max 1256 SLSP 17 Jan (FB), high.
Red-breasted Merganser: max 31 CLB 15 Dec (MY); several records, normally rare.
Ruddy Duck: 1 MyPt 30 Jan (fide CTH), only report.

HAWKS-ALCIDS

Bald Eagle: max 2 MNWR thru; 2 Chemung River thru.
N. Goshawk: max 2 Groton 17 Jan.
Red-tailed Hawk: max 60 ICBC.
Rough-legged Hawk: max 11 ICBC.
GOLDEN EAGLE: last 1 Mt. Pleasant TOMP 11 Dec (MY); 1 CCBC (B&JO); arr Tompkins-Cortland Community College TOMP 12 Feb (MY), early; max 2 Red Jacket Yacht Club SENE 22 Feb (JK!); rare.
Merlin: 1Geneva Lakefront ONTA 24 Dec; 1 Elmira 7 Jan; 1 Seneca Falls 8 Jan; 1 Sapsucker Woods TOMP 14 Jan; 1 Groton 31 Jan; 1 Dryden 3 Feb; 1 Elmira 7 Feb.
PEREGRINE FALCON: 1 Geneva to Penn Yan 3 Jan-1 Feb (GL BGu).
Ruffed Grouse: max 5 ICBC; 3 ECBC; 1 WCBC, scarce.
Wild Turkey: max 114 ICBC; 97 ECBC; 72 WCBC; 51 Trumansburg 5 Feb; rebounding.
Virginia Rail: 1 TCAH 25 Feb.
Am. Coot: max 520 WCBC, record high; 445 ICBC, record high; 301 MyPt 15 Dec.
SANDHILL CRANE: 1 MNWR thru 2 Dec.
Killdeer: max 4 Elmira 21 Dec; 2-3 Elmira to 30 Dec; 3 MyPt 6-8 Dec; several other reports, normally rare.
Dunlin: 1 MNWR 11-14 Dec.
Am. Woodcock: arr 1 Brooktondale 28 Feb, only report.
Ring-billed Gull: max 1000+ KHAMO 1-9 Dec; 649 ECBC, record high.
Herring Gull: max 614 MCBC; 500 SML 29 Jan.
Bonaparte's Gull: max 4 Elmira Dam CHEM 30 Dec (BO); 3 CLSWMA SENE 9 Dec; 1 WCBC; 1 HoHo 5 Jan (BE); rare.
THAYER'S GULL: 1 MCBC 1 Jan (CSa!, NYSARC).
Iceland Gull: max 2 GCBC 1 Jan; 2 SML 26 Jan-22 Feb; 2 Seneca Landfill ONTA 27 Feb; several reports of individuals.

Lesser Black-backed Gull: max 3 CLSP 22 Dec; 3 VanCleef L SENE 29 Jan; 2 CLSP 14 Dec; 2 SML 29 Jan; increasing.
Glaucous Gull: 1 LPSP 2 Dec; 1 Watkins Glen 14 Dec; 1 SML 26 Jan-6 Feb.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS

Rock Dove: max 1129 ICBC, record high.
Mourning Dove: max 358, ECBC.
E. Screech-Owl: max 14 ICBC, record high.
Great Horned Owl: max 8 ECBC.
Snowy Owl: 1 Fayette 18 Jan (FB), only report.
Barred Owl: 1 ICBC; 1 Sout 7 Jan; 1 HHSP 14 Feb.
Short-eared Owl: max 7 Ledyard 14 Dec.
N. Saw-whet Owl: 1 WDan 11 Dec- 7 Jan; 1 Corning Community College STEU 14 Jan; 1 HHSP; 1 Dryden 18 Feb; 1 Dryden 27 Feb; only reports.
Red-headed Woodpecker: 1 Cana 3 Jan (fide JH), only report.
Red-bellied Woodpecker: max 46 ICBC; 4 KHAMO 31 Jan.
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: 2 ICBC; 1 WCBC; 1 Salmon Creek TOMP 3 Jan; 1 HoHo 6 Jan; 1 Phelps 6 Jan; only reports.
Downy Woodpecker: max 156 ICBC; 6 Chemung 27 Feb.
Pileated Woodpecker: max 6 ICBC, low.

FLYCATCHERS-WAXWINGS

N. Shrike: max 2 Summerhill CAYU 26 Dec; several individuals.
Blue Jay: max 302 ICBC, low.
Am. Crow: max 25,000-75,000 Auburn 9 Dec; 1269 ECBC, record high; 1150 Ithaca 22 Jan.
Fish Crow: 6 Stewart P TOMP 6 Dec; 4 BiFl 13 Dec; 2 Elmira 17 Dec.
Com. Raven: max 4 ECBC; 4 CCBC; 4 ICBC, record high.
Horned Lark: max 300 ECBC, record high; 123 Vet 2 Jan.
Red-breasted Nuthatch: max 21 ICBC; 5 HHSP 3 Feb.
Winter Wren: 1Cornell University 23-24 Jan; 1 Buttermilk Falls SP 27 Feb.
Golden-crowned Kinglet: max 46 ICBC; 10 HoHo 6 Jan.
Ruby-crowned Kinglet: 1 ICBC; 1 LPSP 4 Jan, 20 Feb; 1 Aurora 18 Jan; 1 MyPt 30 Jan; only reports.
E. Bluebird: max 44 ICBC; 8 KHAMO 6 Dec; 8 Ledyard 24 Jan; 8 BiFl 7 Feb.
Hermit Thrush: max 3 ICBC, record high; 1 KHAMO 31 Dec; 1 WCBC; only reports.
Am. Robin: max 800 Lansing 21 Feb; 350 KHAMO 30-31 Jan; 276 MCBC.
European Starling: max 3094 ICBC; 300 Chemung 27 Feb.
AMERICAN PIPIT: max 3 Vet 2 Jan (DRu); 1-2 Elmira 21 Dec-15 Jan (mob); 1 Chemung 16 Jan (DCl); rare.
Cedar Waxwing: max 202 ICBC; 100 Dryden 12 Feb.

WARBLERS

Yellow-rumped Warbler: max 32 MCBC 1 Jan (SK); 20 Ledyard 30 Jan; 12 Genoa 6 Feb; 5 LPSP 29 Jan-20 Feb.
Com. Yellowthroat: 1 MCBC; 1 HoHo 6 Jan (BE), only reports.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS

E. Towhee: 1 ECBC; 1 ICBC, only reports.
Am. Tree Sparrow: max 490 ICBC; 11 MTSP 12 Dec.
Field Sparrow: 1 Sout 15-17 Jan (DCl), only report.
Savannah Sparrow: 1Cana 3 Jan (fide JH), only report.
Fox Sparrow: arr 1 Newfield 18 Feb; 1 23 Feb BiFl, early.
Swamp Sparrow: max 6 ECBC, record high; 3 ICBC; 1 Hall 27 Dec, only reports.
White-throated Sparrow: max 6 ECBC.
Dark-eyed Junco: max 751 ICBC; 18 MTSP 12 Dec.
Lapland Longspur: max 5 Cana 3 Jan; 3 Genoa 17 Jan; 3 Lansing 17 Jan; 3 Vet 30 Jan.
Snow Bunting: max 500 Cana 17 Jan; 454 MCBC; 451 Ledyard 19 Jan.
Red-winged Blackbird: arr 1 BiFl 13 Feb; several reports across Region 14 Feb; max 1000 Route 79 Burdett 20 Feb (JK); 85 ICBC, record high; 75 Hors 2 Jan.

YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD: 1 Canoga 5-16 Jan (EP mob).
Rusty Blackbird: max 17 ICBC; 6 Vet 16 Jan; 3 Phelps ONTA 6 Jan; 2 Covert SENE 18 Jan.
Com. Grackle: max 51 CLB 16 Jan; 10 Elmira 1 2REVJan; arr 1 BiFl 27 Feb.
Brown-headed Cowbird: max 51 CLB 16 Jan; 50 Hors 1-2 Jan; arr 2 Dryden 14 Feb.
Baltimore Oriole: max 2 TOMP 18 Jan (AG fide MaRe).
Purple Finch: max 19 ICBC; 1-3 WDan 22 Jan-21 Feb; 2 SuSF 19 Feb; 1 MCBC, only reports.
House Finch: max 321 ICBC, lowest in 18 years; 50 Connecticut Hill 18 Feb.
Am. Goldfinch: max 180 ICBC; 15 Shindagin Hollow TOMP 11 Feb.
Evening Grosbeak: max 2 Groton 17 Jan; 1 Dryden 31 Jan, only reports.
House Sparrow: max 759 ICBC.

REGION 4-SUSQUEHANNA (FALL 1998)

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Region 4 birders had hoped the fall of 1998 would bring relief from the summer drought conditions, but unfortunately our hopes were not realized. Data available from the Binghamton Airport Weather Station showed that although the total precipitation for September, 2.59 inches, and October, 3.08 inches, was near normal, only 1.43 inches of rain fell in November. This was 1.85 inches less than expected. Many of us also had the impression that daily temperatures this fall were warmer than usual, but the airport weather station records indicated that the average monthly temperatures for September, 62.8°F, October, 49.2°F, and November, 39.1°F, were normal. Data on wind direction was analyzed because of its influence on autumn migration. We counted the number of days in each month in which the winds were favorable, that is, blowing from the west-northwest, northwest, north-northwest or north and looked for a pattern of dates. There were 12 days in September that had favorable winds; five of these dates were consecutive, 4 - 8 September. There were 17 favorable days in October and 13 days in November. In fact, there were 17 straight days, 29 October - 8 November, during which the wind blew from a favorable direction.

Moderate to low water levels provided the necessary mudflats along lakes and rivers for a variety of shorebirds. Regionally uncommon, two

American Golden-Plovers were found at Cincinnatus Lake, as well as both Greater and Lesser yellowlegs and a Pectoral Sandpiper,.the latter two lingering for more than a week. However, Semipalmated Sandpiper and Least Sandpiper were not recorded.

A Red-throated Loon at Chenango Lake was an uncommon sighting, while the Common Loon was missed entirely. Some ducks fared better, with good numbers of Wood Duck, American Black Duck, Hooded and Common mergansers. Many species were scarce, with only single reports of American Wigeon, Greater Scaup, Lesser Scaup, and White-winged Scoter. Missed were Northern Pintail, Blue-winged Teal, Gadwall, Canvasback, and Red-breasted Merganser. A Regional rarity was a **Lesser Black-backed Gull**, the second Regional record. The Franklin Mountain Hawkwatch had mostly average numbers, with Turkey Vulture having a record year. Bald Eagle, American Kestrel, and Peregrine Falcon had good counts. Northern Goshawk, Rough-legged Hawk, and Golden Eagle were below average.

The bird of the season and the year was an adult male **Anna's Hummingbird, a first New York State record.** It put Binghamton on the map when it was identified on 18 November. It had apparently been around the yard for at least three weeks prior to the 18th . Upon seeing this bird so late in the season, the owner of the property restored the feeder which had already been taken down for the season.. Hundreds of birders traveled from several states in the first week to view the bird, and the couple hosting this rarity were more than willing to share their yard. There was some question what to do with this little bird. Many discussions, primarily on the intenet, brought out the worst and best in birders. Some felt that nature should take its course and the bird be left alone. Others felt that it must be in some distress, if not in its behavior, then in its lack of navigational traits to keep it closer to its home range, and should therefore be captured to overwinter it. The Anna's was banded and released on 22 November. It was still coming to the feeder at the end of the period.

A Ruby-throated Hummingbird was also seen in the same yard with the Anna's Hummingbird in November. Another regionally uncommon sighting was an immature Red-headed Woodpecker northwest of Castle Creek, Broome County.

Passerines were not observed in any impressive numbers. Most flycatchers, vireos, and warblers had low counts on few reports. Uncommon sightings were Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Gray-cheeked Thrush, Philadelphia Vireo, Bay-breasted and Blackpoll warblers. Missed were Marsh Wren, Yellow-throated and Warbling vireos, and Indigo Bunting.

Black-and-white Warbler was not seen for the second consecutive fall. It had always been seen prior to 1997.

A Chukar, an exotic species, was seen in Binghamton frequenting a backyard feeding station. Its origin was unknown.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

BUNP- Binghamton Universtity Nature Preserve, BROO; BPd-Boland Pond,BROO; BrPd-Brick Pond,TIOG; ChL-Chenango Lake, CHEN; CinL-Cincinnatus Lake, CHEN/CORT; DOAS- Delaware-Otsego Audubon Sanctuary; FHNC - Finch Hollow Nature Center, BROO; FMHW-Franklin Mountain Hawk Watch, OTSE; HPd-Hawkins Pond, BROO; CoP-Nathaniel Cole Park, BROO; RRHW-Riley Road Hawk Watch, CORT; Ves-Vestal, BROO; WeB-West Burlington, OTSE; WPR-Whitney Point Reservoir and nearby areas, BROO.

LOONS-DUCKS

Red-throated Loon: 1 ChL 22 Nov (EG), uncommon.

Pied-billed Grebe: max 5 BPd 17 Oct; last 15 Nov ChL.

Double-crested Cormorant: 5 reports, max 15 RRHW 15 Oct.

Great Blue Heron: max 2 at WPR 3 Oct; low numbers.

Great Egret: 1 OTSE 24 Sep, only report.

Green Heron: 1 Sep, 3 Oct reports; last 1 Conklin, BROO 14 Oct.

Mute Swan: up to 2 BPd 9 Sep-1 Nov.

Snow Goose: 1 BROO 28 Sep; last 1 CinL 5 Nov (PB), scarce.

Canada Goose: several reports, max 725 WPR 10 Nov.

Wood Duck: 6 BROO 16 Sep; 30 BrPd 9 Oct; about 70 Triangle thru Sep (T&NT).

Green-winged Teal: 3 Guilford L 12 Sep; CinL 2-14 Nov, max 5, scarce.

Am. Black Duck: max 36 CinL 2 Nov.

Am. Wigeon: 1 BPd 9,10 Oct (MP), only report.

Ring-necked Duck: 8 WPR 24 Oct; last ChL 15 Nov; only reports.

Greater Scaup: 1 Marathon 11 Nov (TD), only one.

Lesser Scaup: 1 CinL 2-5 Nov (PB, MP, ES), only report.

White-winged Scoter: ChL 11 Oct (EG), unusual, no details.

Bufflehead: 4 reports to 15 Nov; max 10 WPR 2 Nov (ES).

Hooded Merganser: max 33 CinL 2 Nov; 1 ChL 29 Nov.

Com. Merganser: max 55 WPR 2 Nov; scattered reports.
Ruddy Duck: 5 BrPd 9 Oct (MP); 1 CinL 27 Oct (ES); 1 ChL 15 Nov (EG), scarce.

HAWKS-ALCIDS

Turkey Vulture: FMHW total 163, best year ever; 31 on 17 Oct 2nd best day, last 9 Nov.
Osprey: FMHW total 75, best day 11 on 22 Sep, last 16 Oct, only report.
Bald Eagle: FMHW total 15, second best year to 1994; 2 ad Chenango Bridge BROO 15 Sep (FHNC).
N. Harrier: FMHW total 42; last WB 25 Nov (TS), hunting.
Sharp-shinned Hawk: FMHW total 359, best count since 1994.
Cooper's Hawk: FMHW total 57, best count since 1994.
N. Goshawk: FMHW total 12, below average, only report.
Red-shouldered Hawk: FMHW total 34, lowest count since 1991.
Broad-winged Hawk: FMHW total 740, third best year; highest day count 243 on 17 Sep.
Red-tailed Hawk: FMHW total 1187, best since 1995, but below average; third worst year to 1996-97.
Rough-legged Hawk: arr 1 WB 22 Oct (TS); FMHW total 5, below average; 4 RRHW Nov.
Golden Eagle: FMHW total 35, arr 23 Sep.
Am. Kestrel: FMHW total 90, best year since 1994; 4 other reports Sep; last CHEN 5 Nov.
Merlin: FMHW total 9, average; 1 BUNP 3-10 Sep (JS).
Peregrine Falcon: FMHW total 11, second best year next to 1993.
Ring-necked Pheasant: 1 WPR 24 Oct (SK, MP), a release area.
Ruffed Grouse: 2 BROO; 2 CHEN, only reports.
Wild Turkey: max 26 FHNC 1 Oct; few reports.
Virginia Rail: 1 BPd 23 Sep (NCBC), only report.
Sora: 1 imm BPd 23 Sep (NCBC), no details.
Com. Moorhen: 1 imm BPd 10 Oct (MP,EHw).
Am. Coot: 3 BPd 9 Oct; max 45 WPR 14 Nov; R,egionally scarce.
Am. Golden-Plover: 2 CinL 27 Oct-2 Nov (ES), uncommon.
Greater Yellowlegs: 3 CinL 4, 8 Nov.
Lesser Yellowlegs: 2 CinL 2 Nov; max 4 on 14 Nov.
Solitary Sandpiper: 1 Cole P, BROO 25 Sep, scarce.
Spotted Sandpiper: 4 reports; last 2 Nov, scarce.
Pectoral Sandpiper: 1 CinL 2-14 Nov (PB, ES).
Com. Snipe: CinL 27 Oct -14 Nov, max 18 on 27 Oct, last 8 on 14 Nov; 1 other report.
Ring-billed Gull: max 350 WPR 10 Nov.
Herring Gull: 2 reports, low.
LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL: 1 CinL 2 Nov; 1 WPR 10 Nov, both (ES), rare, possibly same bird considering locations.
Great Black-backed Gull: 1 WPR 10 Nov (ES), uncommon.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: 1 E. Maine Rd BROO (NCBC).
E. Screech-Owl: 1 Vestal 3,8 Oct (S&LB); 2 WB thru, 1 in nest box 7 Nov (TS).
Great Horned Owl: singles Triangle, Westover, Vestal BROO; max 2 T Preston CHEN (EH).
Barred Owl: T Preston Oct, Nov, max 3 on 7 Oct; 2 other reports
Com. Nighthawk: 1 Endicott 3 Sep (ES), early departure, scarce.
Ruby-throated Hummingbird: 1 McGraw 21 Sep (BT) feeding on sapsucker holes; last 18 Nov Binghamton, late.
ANNA'S HUMMINGBIRD: 1 Binghamton 18 Nov-end of period (mob), first State record, intro.
Red-headed Woodpecker: 1 imm Leetville Rd BROO 25 Oct (RG), uncommon.
Red-bellied Woodpecker: 1 Port Crane BROO 5 Nov, scarce

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: 3 scattered reports, last 1 Triangle 13 Sep, scarce.
N. Flicker: widespread reports to 1 Nov.
Pileated Woodpecker: several BROO, also singles in CORT and OTSE.

FLYCATCHERS-WAXWINGS

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: banded 1 Ves 1 Sept (GK).
"Traill's" Flycatcher: 1 Ves 5 Sept (GK), banded.
Least Flycatcher: last BROO 2 Oct.
E. Phoebe: last CHEN 21 Oct.
Great Crested Flycatcher: 1 Triangle 9 Sept (T&NT).
E. Kingbird: 1 HPd 9 Sept (FHNCS).
N. Shrike: arr 1 Cooperstown 31 Oct (JD).
Blue-headed Vireo: last 1 BROO 26 Oct (RG).
Philadelphia Vireo: last 1 Ves 17 Sept (GK), banded.
Red-Eyed Vireo: last 1 Ves 3 Oct (GK&HM); 31 banded Ves Sep.
Fish Crow: 12 BROO 3 Nov (ES), uncommon.
Com. Raven: many reports DOAS Sep & Nov; 1 HPd 3 Sep (FHNCS).
Horned Lark: last 1 CHEN 5 Nov (EH).
Tree Swallow: last 3 DOAS 19 Oct.
Carolina Wren: last 1 BROO 30 Oct (ES).
House Wren: last 1 Ves 4 Oct (GK&HM), banded.
Winter Wren: last 1 BROO 31 Oct (MG).
Golden-crowned Kinglet: 5 Ves Oct (GK&HM), banded; multiple BROO Nov.
Ruby-crowned Kinglet: 30 Ves Oct (GK&HM), banded; last 5 CHEN 5 Nov.
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: CHEN 13 Sept.
E. Bluebird: last Triangle 16 Nov (T&NT).
Veery: last 1 Ves 20 Sep (GK), banded.
Gray-Cheeked Thrush: 1 BROO 13 Oct (MP).
Swainson's Thrush: 1 Ves 11 Oct (GK&HM, banded).
Hermit Thrush: last I WeB 25 Oct (TS).
Wood Thrush: 1 WeB 30 Sep (TS).
Gray Catbird: last 1 CHEN 30 Oct; max 24 banded Ves Sep (GK).
N. Mockingbird: many reports BROO Oct.
Brown Thrasher: last 1 BROO 29 Sep (MP).
Am. Pipit: last 1 CinL 5 Nov (MP&PB).
Cedar Waxwing: last 16 CHEN 26 Nov.

WARBLERS

Blue-winged Warbler: 1 BROO 15 Sep (MP&PB); 1 Ves 15 Sep (GK), banded.
Nashville Warbler: last 1 Ves 29 Sep (GK), banded; max 4 Ves Sep (GK), banded.
N. Parula: 2 BROO 15 Sep (MP&PB).
Yellow Warbler: 1 BROO 14 Sep.
Chestnut-sided Warbler: last 1 Ves 20 Sep (GK), banded.
Magnolia Warbler: last 1 Ves 22 Sep (GK), banded; max 20 Ves Sep (GK), banded
Cape May Warbler: 1 Triangle 13 Sep (T&NT).
Black-throated Blue Warbler: last 1 Ves 22 Sep (GK), banded.
Yellow-rumped Warbler: last 1 CHEN 5 Nov.
Black-throated Green Warbler: last 1 Ves 30 Sep (GK), banded.
Blackburnian Warbler: 1 Triangle 13 Sep (T&NT).
Prairie Warbler: last 1 FHNC 16 Sep (NCBC).
Palm Warbler: 1 CHEN 13 Sep (DW).
"Western" Palm Warbler: 1 Ves 9 Sep (GK), banded.
Bay-breasted Warbler: 1 CHEN 15 Sep (DW).
Blackpoll Warbler: 1 Ves 19 Sep (GK). banded.
Am. Redstart: last 1 Ves 19 Sep (GK). banded.
Ovenbird: last 2 Ves 20 Sep (GK). banded.
Connecticut Warbler: 1 IBM woods Endwell BROO 14,15 Sep (MP&PB).
Mourning Warbler: 1 BROO 15 Sep (MP&PB).
Com. Yellowthroat: last 1 BROO 19 Oct (MP).
Wilson's Warbler: last 1 Ves 17 Sep (GK). banded
Canada Warbler: last 1 BROO 15 Sep (MP).

TANAGERS-WEAVERS

Scarlet Tanager: last 3 OTSE 26 Sep (IW).
E. Towhee: last 1 CHEN 21 Oct (EH).
Am. Tree Sparrow: arr FHNG 7 Oct (FHNCS).
Chipping Sparrow: last 6 CHEN 30 Oct (EH).
Field Sparrow: last 1 Ves 24 Oct (GK), banded.
Vesper Sparrow: 1 CORT 1 1 Nov (TD).
Savannah Sparrow: 1 BROO 23 Sep (MP).
Fox Sparrow: last 1 FHNC 13 Nov.
Lincoln's Sparrow: last I FHNC 20 Oct (MP).
Song Sparrow: last WeB 28 Nov, small flock.
Swamp Sparrow: last 1 FHNC 4 Nov (FHNCS).
White-throated Sparrow: last 1 FHNC 24 Nov; 50 banded Ves Oct (GK&HM).
White-crowned Sparrow: last 2 WPR 24 Oct (MP&SK).
Snow Bunting: arr 35 WPR 2 Nov (ES).
Rose-breasted Grosbeak: CHEN (DW).
Red-winged Blackbird: last WPR 15 Nov (MP&PB), large flock.
E. Meadowlark: last 1 WeB 31 Oct (TS).
Rusty Blackbird: last 1 CinL 14 Nov (NCBC).
Com. Grackle: last 50+ BROO 25 Oct.
Brown-headed Cowbird: 15 WPR 24 Oct (MP&SK).
Baltimore Oriole: 1 BROO 15 Sep (MP&PB).
Purple Finch: last BROO 21 Nov (S&LB).
Am. Goldfinch: last 25+ CORT 21 Oct (BT).
Evening Grosbeak: 1 CORT 12 Nov (TD).

EXOTICS

Chukar: 1 BROO 27 Nov (PB).

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REGION 4-SUSQUEHANNA (WINTER 1998-1999)

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Like last year, the warmest winter on record, this was an extraordinarily mild winter. It ranked 92 in mildness out of 104 winters, with an average temperature of about 27.9 degrees according to the National Weather Service at Binghamton Regional Airport. The daily average high temperatures in December, 40.6°F, and February, 35.7°F, rose above the freezing point. In fact, the average daily temperatures for these months, 33.1°F and 27.9°F, respectively, were well above normal. January temperatures, averaging 30.9°F, were normal, but even January had its balmy days, a high of 53 °F being recorded on January 23 and 24. There was also quite a warming trend in the last half of January, with the average daily high being about 39°F.

This winter was also a particularly dry one. We received only 1.59 inches of precipitation in December, 1.41 inches less than normal, and 1.55 inches in February, 0.71 inches less than normal. Snowfall during these two months was also below average. A total of 6.2 inches of snow hit the ground in December, and the total snowfall recorded for February was 8.4 inches. Once again, January was our most winter-like month. Our area received a total of 4.75 inches of precipitation in January making it our wettest winter month and a total of 24.8 inches of snow making it our whitest winter month. In fact, the only major storm of our reporting season fell on January 14 when 9.8 inches of snow blanketed our Region Overall, snowfall remained well below the average of 83.6 inches.

Waterfowl numbers were not too impressive, reflecting the mild weather and low water levels. Common species such as Canada Goose, Mallard, and Common Merganser had high counts, although American Black Duck continued scarce. The Federation Waterfowl Count produced a few species not seen on any other day through the season. They were Tundra Swan, Canvasback, Lesser Scaup, and Oldsquaw. The 9.8 inches of snow on 13, 14 January, and the daily high average of 39°F for the remainder of the month, with a maximum of 53°F on 23, 24 January, set the stage for quickly rising river levels dispersing most waterfowl seen during the count. Missed species were Red-Throated Loon, and scoters,

Sparse snow cover made for good counts of hawks. Good numbers of Bald Eagle, Cooper's Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, and Rough-legged Hawk were reported. Northern Harrier was scarce, not seen after Christmas Bird Counts. Regionally uncommon was a Red-shouldered Hawk in Johnson City in January, and most unusual was a **Broad-winged Hawk** seen on the Binghamton Christmas Bird Count. Missed were Golden Eagle and Merlin.

Good numbers of Eastern Screech-Owl, Great Horned Owl, and Short-eared Owl were reported. Barred Owl was scarce, with only a single report from the Sherburne Christmas Bird Count. A regionally rare **Long-eared Owl** was found 16 January in Vestal. Barb Cole reported the incident through Marie Petuh. The owl was being mobbed by crows and struck a window at a car dealership across from SUNY Binghamton. It is expected to be rehabilitated and released back into the wild. The last previous Regional report was in 1995.

Another **Lesser Black-backed Gull** was found in the Region, on the Binghamton Christmas Bird Count. This is the second winter report and the fourth report since January 1997. The species was not known to have occurred in Region prior to 1997. The **Anna's Hummingbird** continued to be seen in the Binghamton backyard until 11 December when it was

legally caught by a licensed rehabilitator and transported to Saugerties to be overwintered. See article in *The Kingbird* 48: 280.

The combination of warmer than normal temperatures and lower than normal snow covering probably accounts for the noticeable lack of sightings of common migrants or wanderers from the north. While good numbers of American Tree Sparrows were recorded throughout the season, the presence of common winter feeder visitors such as Common Redpolls, Pine Siskins and Evening Grosbeaks were reported only by Christmas Bird Counts in Binghamton and Owego. No reports of Red or White-winged crossbills were submitted and only one Pine Grosbeak was located. No irruptive species such as Snowy Owl or Northern Hawk Owl were recorded in the Region. On the other hand, Eastern Bluebird, Song Sparrow and Red-winged Blackbird, which normally head south in the fall, were reported in good numbers throughout the season.

The four-star bird of the season was the male **Western Tanager** reported by Bill Toner of McGraw, Cortland County. Bill must have been an extra good boy this year because the bird, in winter plumage, first appeared at his feeder on Christmas Eve and was subsequently reported on 25, 31 December and 2-4, 10 January. Photographs were taken and corroboration was obtained from other observers. This is a Regional first.

CONTRIBUTORS

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ABBREVIATIONS

BCBC-Binghamton Christmas Bird Count, 27 Dec; ChBr-Chenango Bridge, BROO; FWC-Federation Waterfowl Count, 17 Jan; FHNC-Finch Hollow Nature Center, Johnson City; OCBC-Oneonta Christmas Bird Count, 19 Dec.; OwCBC-Owego Christmas Bird Count, 1 Jan; RRHW-Riley Road Hawk Watch, CORT; SCBC-Sherburne Christmas Bird Count,

19 Dec; TBC-Tioga Bird Club; WPR-Whitney Point Reservoir and adjacent areas.

LOONS-DUCKS

Com. Loon: 1 FWC CHEN; 1 Hillcrest BROO 11-12 Feb (RG, MP)
Pied-billed Grebe: 1 OwCBC; 4 FWC; 1 Hillcrest 11, 16 Feb.
Horned Grebe: 11 FWC; 1 Endwell 21 Jan. (ES), only 8th report in last 20 winters.
Great Blue Heron: 16 on three CBC's; few reports Jan, Feb, max 6 Susquehanna River from Johnson City to Endicott 17 Jan.
Turkey Vulture: 3 on SCBC; 1 George F. Highway BROO 26 Feb (GK).
Tundra Swan: 2 FWC CHEN?.
Mute Swan: 2 BCBC; BPd 3, 16 Feb.
Snow Goose: 1 TIOG Feb (TBC), no date given.
Canada Goose: 4064 CBC's; 2369 FWC; large numbers TIOG Feb, no dates.
Wood Duck: 10 SCBC, only report.
Am. Black Duck: 61 CBC's; 400 FWC; 5 N. Norwich 22 Jan, scarce.
Mallard: 1423 CBC's; 2953 FWC.
N. Pintail: 1 BCBC; 3 FWC; 4 Center Village BROO 17 Jan. (RG).
Canvasback: 2 FWC, not seen every year.
Redhead: 37 FWC; 36 Endwell 21 Jan (ES), high concentration.
Ring-necked Duck: 2 FWC; 1 Vestal 28 Feb (GK, HM).
Greater Scaup: 3 FWC at Endwell; 2 Endwell 21 Feb (ES).
Lesser Scaup: 9 FWC, often missed.
scaup sp: 1 Vestal 28 Feb (GK, HM)
Oldsquaw: 3 FWC at Endwell.
Com. Goldeneye: 19 FWC; TIOG Jan, Feb (TBC), no numbers or dates given.
Bufflehead: 2 WPR 6 Dec (MP); 7 FWC; Feb TIOG (TBC), no date.
Hooded Merganser: max 8 WPR 6 Dec; 2 Bing 16 Dec.; 1 SCBC; 17 FWC; 1 Vestal 28 Feb.
Com. Merganser: 249 CBC's; 4 reports max 26 WPR 6 Dec; 261 on FWC.
Red-breasted Merganser: 1 OwCBC, scarce.

HAWKS-ALCIDS

Bald Eagle: 3 birds on 2 reports BROO Jan; 4 reports DELA Jan, regular sites plus Delancey 17 Jan, max 7 on 24 Jan (TBC), no specific locations mentioned; 1 Schenevus OTSE 21 Jan (D&TK); 3 ad Otsego L. 25 Feb (BH); 1 Conklin BROO 24 Feb (NK).
N. Harrier: 16 CBC's, scarce after Dec.
Sharp-shinned Hawk: 9 CBC's; 5 reports Jan and 2 in Feb, average.
Cooper's Hawk: 6 on three CBC's; 4 reports each Dec, Jan, Feb, average; no DELA reports.
N. Goshawk: 3 on three CBC's; 1 Binghamton 24 Feb; 1 TIOG Feb, no date.
Red-shouldered Hawk: 1 FHNC 12, 18 Jan, very uncommon in winter.
BROAD-WINGED HAWK: 1 BCBC, extremely unusual.
Red-tailed Hawk: 120 CBC's; good numbers.
Rough-legged Hawk: 1 RRHW 1 Dec; 38 CBC's; 9 reports Jan, max 2; 5 reports Feb, max 2; "less common in WB"(TS).
Am. Kestrel: 13 on three CBC's; 2 reports BROO Jan; 2 reports OTSE Jan, one thru; TIOG Feb, no date.
Ring-necked Pheasant: 4 on two CBC's; 1 TIOG Dec and 2 there Feb; 1 Binghamton 19 Feb.
Ruffed Grouse: 9 on two CBC's, low; 2 reports each Dec, Jan; 4 reports Feb.
Wild Turkey: 964 CBC's; 5-6 reports Jan, Feb.
Am. Coot: 100 FWC; 1 Endwell 21 Jan (ES), scarce after mid-winter floods.
Ring-billed Gull: 100 WPR 6 Dec (MP); 78 on two CBC's; Norwich thru.
Herring Gull: 42 on three CBC's; a other scattered reports.
LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL: 1 BCBC 27 Dec, 4th Regional report,
Great Black-backed Gull: 5 BCBC; 1 Endicott 2 Jan (RG).

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS

Rock Dove: 5584 CBC's.
Mourning Dove: 1429 CBC's, average.
E. Screech-Owl: 2 CBC's; 1 ChBr. 10 Jan (RG); T. Binghamton 17 Feb; Morgan Rd BROO 19 Feb; Chenango Forks 21 Feb (T&NT); good counts
Great Horned Owl: 11 BCBC; Maryland OTSE 1 Jan; ChBr 10 Jan; 2 reports BROO Feb; TIOG Dec, Feb, good numbers
Barred Owl: 1 SCBC, scarce.
Long-eared Owl: 1 Vestal 16 Jan (BC), injured, rehabbed, and released, 1st since 1995, intro.
Short-eared Owl: 2 Arnold Rd BROO 18 Dec (RG); Conklin 10 Jan (EHw); WB 9, 10 Jan (TS); REEC 15 Jan; T. Plainfield 22 Jan (TS), great numbers.
ANNA'S HUMMINGBIRD: 1 male Binghamton thru 1-11 Dec, intro.
Belted Kingfisher: 17 on three CBC's; three Dec, one Jan report, scarce after mid-Jan.
Red-bellied Woodpecker: 18 OwCBC, very high count; two other TIOG reports; not reported elsewhere.
Downy Woodpecker: 165 CBC's.
Hairy Woodpecker: 36 CBC's, low.
N. Flicker: 4 on three CBC's; 4 BROO reports.
Pileated Woodpecker: 7 on three CBC's; 3 reports BROO, max 2 Endwell 21 Jan, 11 Feb (ML); TIOG Dec, Feb.

FLYCATCHERS-WAXWINGS

N. Shrike: 1 OwCBC 1 Jan (J&CB); Conklin 26 Jan (EHw); OTSE 16 Feb (JD); scarce.
Blue Jay: 678 total from all Regional CBC.
Am. Crow: 4807 total from all Regional CBC; 1 partial albino BROO Jan (RG, MP).
Fish Grow: 4 total (BCBC, OwCBC); 1 BROO 3 Feb (ES), average.
Com. Raven: 1 Endwell 26 Jan (FHNCS); 1 Vestal 10 Feb (EK); uncommon.
Horned Lark: 390 total (OwCBC, SCBC); 366 highest ever SCBC; good numbers.
Black-capped Chickadee: 1,721 total from all Regional CBC.
Tufted Titmouse: 26 total from BCBC, OwCBC, SCBC.
Red-breasted Nuthatch: 21 total from all Regional CBC.
White-breasted Nuthatch: 186 total from all Regional CBC.
Brown Creeper: 21 total from all Regional CBC.
Carolina Wren: 5 total (BCBC, OwCBC); 4 BROO Jan.
Winter Wren: 1 27 Dec BCBC; 1 Westover 17 Jan (ES); not found every year.
Golden-crowned Kinglet: 55 total all Regional CBC.
E. Bluebird: 12 total (BCBC, OwCBC);1 FHNC 12 Feb (MP), singing male.
Am. Robin: 30 total (BCBC, OwCBC, SCBC); 1 partial albino BROO Jan (RG,MP).
Gray Catbird: TIOG Feb (DWe).
N. Mockingbird: 2 total (BCBC,OwCBC); several BROO Feb.
European Starling: 5675 total from all Regional CBC.
Am. Pipit: 2 BROO 17 Jan (ES), unusually late.
Cedar Waxwing: 33 total (BCBC, OwCBC); 24 TIOG 26 Jan (MP,SK,CB).

TANAGERS-WEAVERS

WESTERN TANAGER: 1 male McGraw, CORT 25, 31 Dec, 2-4, 10 Jan (BT, et al), Regional 1st, photos.
Am. Tree Sparrow: 679 total from all Regional CBC.
Fox Sparrow: 1 BROO 2 JAN (SD).
White-throated Sparrow: 4 total (BCBC, OwCBC), low.
Dark-eyed Junco: 927 total from all Regional CBC; 179 SCBC, highest ever.
Lapland Longspur: 1 CHEN 14 Feb (PB).
Snow Bunting: 730 total (OwCBC, SCBC); 713 SCBC, highest ever; 200+ CHEN
1 Feb (EH), 14 Feb (PB,BH).
N. Cardinal: 242 total from all Regional CBC.
Red-winged Blackbird: 221 total (OwCBC, SCBC); 200 SCBC, highest ever; 200
TIOG 19 Feb (MP).

Com. Grackle: 1 BROO 15 Feb (MP).
Brown-headed Cowbird: 7 OwCBC 1 Jan; 1 OTSE 26 Feb (JD).
Pine Grosbeak: 1 WPR 14 Feb (GK,HM).
Purple Finch: 22 total (BCBC, OCBC, OwCBC).
House Finch: 295 total (BCBC, OCBC, OwCBC).
Com. Redpoll: 29 OCBC 19 Dec.
Pine Siskin: 1 OCBC 19 Dec.
Am. Goldfinch: 282 total from all Regional CBC.
Evening Grosbeak: 4 BCBC.
House Sparrow: 1378 total from all Regional CBC.

EXOTICS

Chukar: 1 Binghamton 30 Dec (MW); 22 Jan (PB).

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December's average temperature was 35.4° F, an amazing 7.1° above normal. Precipitation at only 1.74 inches was 1.46 inches below normal. Participants in the early Christmas Bird Counts on 19-20 December had been concerned about everything being open, but that was no longer the case by the end of the month. The last ten days of December saw a rapid cooling and much open water froze over the last several days of the month. January saw an average temperature of 22.5°F which was 0.1° above normal. There were 5.33 inches of preciptation, 2.99 inches above normal, and of course it was nearly all snow, 50.7 inches, and 47 inches of that fell in the first 15 days of the month. February was quite balmy by local standards, with an average temperature of 29.6°F, 5.6° above normal. On thirteen days the daily high was at least 40°. There were only 1.43 inches of precipitation, 0.72 inches below normal, with 5.7 inches of snow.

Yellow-billed Loon two years running? As hard as that is to believe, it happened when Matt Perry found one on West Canada Creek below Hinckley Dam on 18 January. There was some debate about the age of the bird, second year or full adult, or even if there was an identifiable age difference discernable in the field. Given the species infrequent occurrence in the East, , it would seem to be extremely coincidental for two different birds to show up in the same general area in two consecutive years. What are the odds? Can we stretch them to this bird being the same as the bird of '97?

Two Great Cormorants that showed up at the end of November in Oswego and stayed the winter,with the immature bird beginning to grow

some dark breast feathers by the end of the season. Double-crested Cormorants did not fare as well. Mary Alice Koeneke reported six cormorants unable to fly with ice on their wings and two already dead on 2 January. What had been nearly 50 birds on 15 December became zero by 20 January. Koeneke also had single Harlequin Ducks, a female and an immature male, at two locations along Lake Ontario on 17 January. Then, three Harlequins were found at the end of Lakeview Road in Scriba on 20 January, and by the 22nd they had become five, three males and two females. This would appear to be the highest count ever in the state away from Long Island.

Snow Geese were still moving through the Region well into December, and, even though their numbers have greatly increased recently, we usually only see stragglers in winter. The warm December allowed a record number of Northern Shovelers as well as high numbers of American Wigeon and Ruddy Ducks to linger well into the month. There were large numbers of *Aythya* ducks that arrived during the worst part of winter in early January.It is likely they were trying to winter even farther north than Region 5 and were pushed to the open water that remained here. [RHEd: Or they were scattered all over the Region and/or neighboring Regions and concentrated as open water froze.] Surf and Black scoters, often missed in winter, were seen with some frequency, Barrow's Goldeneye returned to Brewerton for the second year, and American Coot also wintered in the Region in large numbers.

No Turkey Vultures were reported from the Dewitt area, where they attempted to winter in previous years, but Bald Eagles continue to winter along Lake Ontario and the Oswego River system including Onondaga Lake. Harriers were fairly common through December but departed with the heavy January snowfall, while Rough-legged Hawks were scarce until February. Reports form Oneida County indicate that Merlin is on the increase as a winter resident.

Killdeer on the Syracuse and Utica CBC's were a result of the mild fall and December, and Purple Sandpiper was able to linger at two locations into December as the Lake Ontario shoreline didn't begin icing up until later than most years. One Common Snipe wintered at the Harbor Brook wetland in Syracuse where they have wintered before.

Iceland and Glaucous gulls were found on the Oswego River after mid-December In February both species peaked in Oswego, where two adult Lesser Black-backed Gulls in different plumages were also found. Bonaparte's Gull lingered on open waters in good numbers into December and two remained on Onondaga Lake in January, rather late. A **Black-legged Kittiwake** in Oswego Harbor in December continued the

recent trend of early winter sightings. One Thayer's Gull was seen on the Oswego River in Phoenix and several other birds whose size and plumage characteristics seemed to fit Thayer's were also seen. On the latter birds it was felt that not every feature could safely be called Thayer's and that these birds could be either darkly marked Iceland Gulls or Thayer's/Kumlien's intergrades (or that they are the same species anyway).

All seven commonly occurring owl species were reported during the season but it was not an owl winter. There was only one sighting of Snowy Owl and despite some checking for Short-eared Owl ,only one was found. Two Red-headed Woodpeckers were more than usual while a single Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was just about the norm. A Red-bellied Woodpecker wintering in the Adirondack foothills looks like another small step in that species' range extension.

Horned Larks wintered successfully in the agricultural areas of the Region even with the heavy January snowfall. In the Adirondacks, Black-capped Chickadee and Red-Breasted Nuthatch counts were good indicating adequate food sources near the breeding grounds. Carolina Wren was reported from many locations around Syracuse during the season, and the generally mild winter certainly helped their reestablishment efforts. As in past years, Perry found Yellow-rumped Warblers wintering in Oneida County feeding on poison ivy berries, and they were found on Howland Island as well.

Snow Buntings that remained in Oswego County into January were forced to move by the deep snow and by the 7th many found their way to feeders in the county. Birders received numerous reports of Snow Buntings, usually named but sometimes just described, coming to feeders where they had never been seen in the past. Most of the buntings departed within a week but some stayed until the end of the month.

Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Gray Catbird, Comon Yellowthroat, Swamp Sparrow, White-Crowned Sparrow, Rusty Blackbird and Eastern Meadowlark were all good winter finds, but the big miss in an otherwise fine half-hardy year was Hermit Thrush. It was a disappointing finch year. Crossbills, Purple Finch, Pine Siskin and Evening Grosbeak were all found in the Adirondacks in small numbers, but they were quite scarce elsewhere while Pine Grosbeak and redpolls never irrupted.

A total of 127 species was seen for the season, which is well above average and reflects both the rarities and the lingering birds. The highlights were **Yellow-billed Loon, Great Cormorant, Harlequin Duck, Barrow's Goldeneye, Thayer's Gull, Lesser Black-backed Gull,** and **Red-headed Woodpecker.**

CONTRIBUTORS

Sue Boettger, Joseph Brin, Bernie Carr, David J Cesari, Lee Chamberlaine, Dorothy W Crumb, Bill Gruenbaum, Barbara Herrgesell, Gene Huggins, Bettye Hughes, Mary Alice Koeneke, Gary Lee, Kevin McGann, David Nash, Gerard Phillips, Matt Perry, Bill Purcell, Marge Rusk, Mickey Scilingo, Chris Spagnoli, Maureen Staloff, Ken Zoller.

ABBREVIATIONS

Bvlle - Baldwinsville, CM - Clay Marsh, DH - Derby Hill, DL - Delta Lake, FH - Fair Haven, Little Sodus Bay and vicinity, HIWMA - Howland Island WMA, LOL - Lake Ontario Littoral, OneiL - Oneida Lake, OnonL - Onondaga Lake, SVB - Sylvan and Verona Beach, Syr - Syracuse, TRWMA - Three Rivers WMA, UM - Utica Marsh, WPd - Woodman Pond

LOONS-DUCKS

Red-throated Loon: singles Oswego 20 Dec and WPd 20 Dec.
Com. Loon: max 6 DL 3 Dec; scattered singles LOL into Feb.
YELLOW-BILLED LOON: 1 Hinckley 18 Jan -1 Feb (MP, DJC ph, NYSARC).
Pied-billed Grebe: max 3 Phoenix 17 Jan; last 1 Brewerton 30 Jan.
Horned Grebe: max 24 Nine Mile Pt 17 Jan.
Red-necked Grebe: 2 OnonL to 19 Dec, only report.
GREAT CORMORANT: ad and juv Oswego all season (mob).
Double-crested Cormorant: max 48 Oswego 15 Dec; 6 ice coated birds Oswego 2 Jan, incapable of flight; none after 20 Jan.
Great Blue Heron: max 9 OnonL 19 Dec, 6 still present late Feb.
Turkey Vulture: 1 Camillus 7 Feb, only report.
Snow Goose: max 1000 Bridgewater 19 Dec; at least 3 other flocks of 200-500 late Dec.
Canada Goose: max 3500 WPd 20 Dec.
Mute Swan: max 4 Leland Pond 7 Jan; 5 other singles reported.
Tundra Swan: 10 WPd 24 Jan, where unusual; 5 FH after 30 Jan, continues recent trend of late migrants.
Wood Duck: max 4 UM 16 Dec; last OnonL 24 Jan.
Gadwall: max 26 OnonL 19 Dec.
Am. Wigeon: max 20 TRWMA 5 Dec; 20 WPd 11 Dec; last 10 WPd 20 Dec.
Am. Black Duck: max 150 WPd 20 Dec.
Mallard: max 500 WPd 20 Dec.
N. Shoveler: max 28 OnonL 19 Dec, unprecedented winter numbers.
N. Pintail: max 14 UM 10 Dec; 2 FH 23 Jan thru.
Green-winged Teal: max 16 OnonL 19 Dec; 4 Meadowbrook Syr thru Feb.
Canvasback: max 150 FH 30 Jan.
Redhead: max 400 LOL 30 Jan.
Ring-necked Duck: max 134 Skaneateles L 16 Jan.
Greater Scaup: max 473 Skaneateles L 16 Jan.
Lesser Scaup: max 275 FH 30 Jan, more than usual.
Harlequin Duck: max 5 Lakeview Road L Ontario 22-24 Jan (DN, mob), inland record high; first 2 different L Ontario sites 17 Jan (MAK).
Surf Scoter: 3 LOL 5 Jan thru.

White-winged Scoter: max 7 LOL 24 Feb.
Black Scoter: 1 ad Nine Mile Point 17 Jan; 2 imm Oswego 7 Feb.
Oldsquaw: max 550 LOL 17 Jan.
Bufflehead: max 75 Oswego 10 Jan.
Com. Goldeneye: max 770 FH 30 Jan.
Barrow's Goldeneye: 1 Brewerton 3 Jan thru (CS).
Hooded Merganser: max 22 WPd 11 Dec; wintered Oswego R.
Com. Merganser: max 1340 OnonL 19 Dec, lower than most years.
Red-breasted Merganser: max 167 Oswego 20 Dec.
Ruddy Duck: max 59 Minoa 19 Dec, higher winter counts only in 1980 and 1983; 1 Oswego 20 Jan thru.

HAWKS-ALCIDS

Bald Eagle: about 4-6 wintering OnonL, Oswego R and LOL; 1 ad UM 30 Jan; 1 ad DL Feb 17; pair Big Moose after 15 Jan; pair Taylor Pd Herk 25 Feb.
N. Harrier: max 3 Sangerfield 29 Dec; singles not uncommon to 15 Jan; 1 West Winfield 14 Feb, only report after.
N. Goshawk: singles Parish 2 Jan and Boylston 21 Jan.
Rough-legged Hawk: scattered singles Dec-Jan; max 10 Fairfield 25 Feb; 7 Schroeppel 14 Feb.
Am. Kestrel: reports of 17 birds; persistent at OSWE locations despite deep snow.
Merlin: 2 Onondaga Pk Syr, where they have wintered since 1991; 1 imm New Hartford 7 Feb; 1 ad male New Hartford 27 Feb; 1 Utica 5 Jan.
Peregrine Falcon: 1 Derby Hill 25 Feb, only verified report.
Ring-necked Pheasant: scattered reports invoving 8-10 inds.
Am. Coot: max 140 WPd 11 Dec; last 50 WPd 31 Dec; up to 40 LOL and Oswego R Jan-Feb, many more than most years.
Killdeer: last 2 Syr and 1 Oriskany 19 Dec; arr Sandy Pond 23 Feb.
Purple Sandpiper: last FH 13 Dec.
Com. Snipe: 1 Harbor Brook Syr thru.
Bonaparte's Gull: max 25 SB 15 Dec; 2 OnonL 17 Jan, late.
Thayer's Gull: 1 Phoenix 3 Feb, 1st winter (MR, NYSARC).
Iceland Gull: max 10 Oswego 24 Feb.
Lesser Black-backed Gull: 1 second winter Phoenix 30 Jan, only report.
Glaucous Gull: max 5 Oswego 22 Feb.
Black-legged Kittiwake: 1 imm Oswego 13 Dec (BH).

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS

Mourning Dove: at feeders Eagle Bay and Old Forge all winter; max 140 West Winfield 29 Dec.
E. Screech-Owl: 8 birds reported.
Great Horned Owl: on nest Cicero 19 Feb and DL 27 Feb.
Snowy Owl: 1 imm Fairfield 8 Jan, only report.
Barred Owl: singles at Beaver L, Whiskey Hollow, and Old Forge.
Long-eared Owl: singles Paris 11-17 Jan and Kirkland 21 Jan.
Short-eared Owl: 1 Liverpool 12 Jan, only report.
N. Saw-whet Owl: 1 Old Forge 7 Dec, only report.
Belted Kingfisher: many Dec reports; scarce Jan; increase in numbers during mild Feb.
Red-headed Woodpecker: single imms Rome 26 Dec and T Van Buren 30 Jan thru.
Red-bellied Woodpecker: 1 east of Boonville 31 Jan, beyond accepted range.
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: 1 Syr 19 Dec, only report.
Black-backed Woodpecker: 1 Windfall Pd 21 Feb, only report.
N. Flicker: only 5 reports after Dec.

FLYCATCHERS-WAXWINGS

N. Shrike: max 2 Fairfield 25 Feb; 1 TRGMA Jan-Feb, only persistent bird; about 5 other reports.
Fish Crow: 2 Shop City Plaza area of Syr all season; 2 Liverpool late Feb.
Com. Raven: max 3 Windfall Pd 21 Feb.
Horned Lark: max 121 Skaneateles 2 Jan.
Black-capped Chickadee: 55 along 2.5

miles of Adk trail 21 Feb, indicates little movement.
Boreal Chickadee: singles Limekiln Swamp 30 Dec and Windfall Pd 21 Feb.
Tufted Titmouse: 3-5 per day many locations, increasing.
Red-breasted Nuthatch: scarce away from breeding areas; sporadic at feeders Jan-Feb.
Brown Creeper: max 3 per day.
Carolina Wren: about 6-8 reported from Syr area; 1 Brewerton to early January, flew into garage and got caught in a mouse trap.
Winter Wren: singles New Hartford thru 27 Dec and UM thru 24 Dec.
Golden-crowned Kinglet: max 7 Kirkland 4 Dec; common many locations.
Ruby-crowned Kinglet: 1 UM thru 16 Dec; 1 Pompey feeder after 7 Jan, missed most winters.
E. Bluebird: max 9 T Van Buren 7 Feb; numerous reports especially LOL, Oswego R, and Van Buren.
Am. Robin: flocks of 50+ LOL Jan despite deep snow; 80-130 ONEI in Feb.
Gray Catbird: 1 UM 16-24 Dec, only report.
N. Mockingbird: max 4 Syr Fairgrounds 19 Dec; 7 at 5 other sites.

WARBLERS

Yellow-rumped Warbler: 1 Oswego 20 Dec; max 2 Kirkland 19 Dec; 2 Howland Island WMA 1 Jan; individuals seen Kirkland thru.
Com. Yellowthroat: 1 Dewitt 6 Dec (SB, BG).

TANAGERS-WEAVERS

Am. Tree Sparrow: max 78 Rome 26 Dec; many observers thought this to be an above average year.
Song Sparrow: max 4 Pumpkin Hollow 16 Jan; uncommon even in Dec.
Swamp Sparrow: 2 CM 2 Dec; 1 UM to 24 Dec.
White-throated Sparrow: max 20 at Pompey feeder all season; 1 Big Moose 11 Jan, rare winter in Adks.
White-crowned Sparrow: singles Dewitt 6 Dec and Skaneateles 2 Jan.
Dark-eyed Junco: max 70 Pompey 1 Jan; subspecies oreganus:1 Utica 19 Dec; mearnsi: 1 Parsh after 1 Jan (MS!).
Lapland Longspur: max 8 Cato 10 Feb, present for 2 weeks (GP); 1 Sangerfield 16 Feb.
Snow Bunting: coming to many OSWE feeders 7-21 Jan during heavy snows; also at a Big Moose feeder 11 Jan; max 800 Cato 2 Feb.
N. Cardinal: 2 pairs wintered Old Forge.
Red-winged Blackbird: scattered reports of 1-3 with last Bvlle 9 Jan; arr 2 CM 16 Feb with many reports after 25 Feb.
E. Meadowlark: 1 Utica 19 Dec, only report.
Rusty Blackbird: 1 Oriskany 21 Dec; 3 Skaneateles 2 Jan.
Com. Grackle: last Dewitt 13 Dec; arr 3 West Winfield 14 Feb.
Brown-headed Cowbird: unusually high winter numbers, maxima include 60 Schroeppel 17 Jan; 30 Pompey 26 Dec to 12 Jan; 33 NH 13 Jan; 10 Van Buren 1 Feb; arr 50 Van Buren 28 Feb.
Purple Finch: 1 T Western early Dec; max 6 Forestport 29 Jan, otherwise few reports - low numbers .
House Finch: numbers relatively low; max 45 Dewitt 25 Dec.
Red Crossbill: small numbers Adks.
White-winged Crossbill: small numbers Adks.
Pine Siskin: not in Adks until mid-Feb; max 20 Windfall Pd 20 Feb.
Am. Goldfinch: low numbers, max 20 UM 10 Dec; also 20 NH 12 Dec
Evening Grosbeak: max 15 Eagle Bay after 7 Jan; 2 Utica 19 Dec; 1 Boylston 21 Jan, only reports away from Adks.

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NO REGION 6 REPORT WAS RECEIVED FOR THIS SEASON

REGION 7 ADIRONDACK-CHAMPLAIN

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The mild "La nina" winter season of 1998-99 began with a 50 mph gust and 50°F thermometer readings on 1 December, the start of a balmy, if blustery, week. Plattsburgh enjoyed 55° on 2 December, 60° on the 4th, and remembered Pearl Harbor Day with a 65 mph gust and the warmest December day on record: 67°! Ground was bare until 13 inches of snow fell on the 17th. On 22 December, the mercury fell 38 degrees, from 51° to a low of 13°. Depending upon date and elevation, Christmas Bird Counts were done on anything from bare ground to two feet of snow, but typically the former.

January saw snow, sleet, and freezing rain by the 3rd, with 10" of snow in the Champlain Valley. Another 11 inches fell on the 8th. Malone was -5° on 11 Jan, and added 6" of snow the next day. January 14 was bitter cold, with -43°F recorded at Harkness in Clinton County, at the start of another bout of snow, freezing rain, and sleet just prior to the Federation Waterfowl Count. Martin Luther King Day saw more icy rain that closed the Adirondack Northway and the road to Lake Placid. A thaw then set in, with a record high 52° at Plattsburgh 24 January, yet Saranac Lake was back down to -27° by Super Bowl Sunday.

The series of ice storms with freezing rain resumed 2 February, but the next day was 45° and sunny. Newcomb felt 7° on 8 February, but Lincoln's Birthday saw another record high of 56° at Plattsburgh. The rest of the month was mild, and the season ended at 44°, with 4" of wet snow falling at Westport. Are winters with temperature extremes of one hundred degrees (43° to 67°) to become the norm?

With American Goldfinches the only major invasive species, feeder watchers again took up their familiar lament of, "Where are all the birds?" (This seems to mean the now almost mythical flocks of Evening Grosbeaks of recent decades.) Yet avian variety was superb, with a record 104 species reported, far better than the 95 in last year's Great Ice Storm winter, and even eclipsing the old mark of 99 in Winter 1996-97. The 27 December Saranac Lake Christmas Bird Count came up with a record 45 species, plus seven more in the count week. For the second consecutive year, Larry Master found an American Wigeon at the Whiteface Inn bubblers on Lake Placid.

Hardy Federation Waterfowl Count observers tied the record 19 species plus a hybrid found in 1997, while adding five Bald Eagles to the midwinter survey. But the best bird found was neither the big fish eater nor fowl, but an immature dark morph **PARASITIC JAEGER** flying just off the Westport Yacht Club 16 January, seen by Peterson, Spaulding, and Wei.

Four half-hardy birds deserve special mention. A **Varied Thrush** in the Coakley yard in Saranac from 21 January through 28 February was identified as a textbook male and photographed by Bill Krueger and the Mitchells during early February. Although Chamberlaine reports 73 NYS records in the "New Bull," this thrush was a first for both Clinton Co. and the Region. The happiest **Gray Catbird** upstate was found in a brushy edge of Bulwagga Bay south of Port Henry by Mack, O'Brien, and Peterson on 6 Dec, where wild grapevines were still heavy-laden. Although Freer (in the" New Bull") notes catbirds "irregularly brave the winter in sheltered thickets near the coast," this was only the fourth winter record for the Region, the third in Essex County. Somewhat less fortunate was a **Pine Warbler** at the Delehanty feeder outside Tupper Lake from 8 December until 13 January, when the mercury plummeted to -25° there. The warbler fed on suet and niger seed. Salzman (in the "New Bull") observes, "it is rare but increasing in winter" upstate, yet this was only the second winter record here and first for Franklin County, following a bird at a Ticonderoga feeder over 20 years ago. A **White-crowned Sparrow** overwintered at the White feeder on the St. Regis Mohawk Reservation in Hogansburg, a second for Franklin Co. and seventh in the Region. Statewide, "numbers linger into Dec, with some remaining through the winter," according to Salzman (also in Bull 98), but rarely this far north.

A few permanent residents - Gray Partridge, Spruce Grouse, Eastern Screech-Owl - were missed, only three gull species were reported, and we had no Brown-headed Cowbirds, alas. And "all goldfinch, all the time" can lose its charm. Still, this wasn't a bad winter -- relatively warm, fine variety, and a few interesting finds. Read, and enjoy . . . .

CONTRIBUTORS

Scott Abrahamson, Ken Adams, Ray Brousseau, Grace Cayea, Blanche Coakley, Dean Cook, Connie Cross, Charlcie Delehanty, Tom Dudones, Don Fasking, Elizabeth Fitts, Mark Gretch, Judy & Roger Heintz, Candy Hess, Drew Hopkins, Paul Kelly, Gail Kemp, Hal Klein, Bill Krueger, Theodore Mack, Mark Manske, Brian McAllister, Jim McGraw, Charlie & Joan Mitchell, Keith Murphy, Emil Novelo, Sean O'Brien, Nancy Olsen, John & Susan Peterson, Gary Randorf, Judy Ross, Marilyn Smith, Dean

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ABBREVIATIONS

AP - Ausable Point WMA; CH - Cumberland Head; CR - Chazy Rivers; ECBC Elizabethtown CBC, 26 Dec; FB Ferd's Bog; FCBC - Ferrisburg CBC, 19 Dec; FWC - Federation Waterfowl Count, 1624 Jan; PCBC - Plattsburgh CBC, 20 Dec; SLCBC - Saranac Lake CBC, 27 Dec; TL - Tupper Lake; WB Whallon's Bay.

LOONS-DUCKS

Red-throated Loon: Westport 19 Dec (J&PT), a good find.
Horned Grebe: max 25 PCBC.
Red-necked Grebe: Westport 5 Dec (J&PT), another good find.
Great Blue Heron: count week SLCBC, only report.
Snow Goose: max 4,000 Essex fields 5 Dec (JP,J&PT); Blue Mountain L 16 Dec (GL) and 115 SLCBC, both late inland; last 18 CH 11 Jan (BK).
Canada Goose: Richardson's small morph WB 5 Dec (SO,TM,JP,J&PT); max 1,279 PCBC; 30 TL 20 Dec (CD); 130 ECBC; 7th L 29 Dec (GL);
count week SLCBC, all late inland.
Tundra Swan: the two arr CH 20 Oct stayed until 30 Dec (NO).
Wood Duck: drake CH 25 Jan (BK), late.
Gadwall: 3 Westport 16 Jan (JP,DS,RW); max 9 there 17 Jan (JP,DS).
Am. Wigeon: 1 SLCBC at Whiteface Inn for 2nd yr.
N. Pintail: 2 drakes AP 25 Jan (EF), late; arr 20 Westport 20 Feb (MG).
Green-winged Teal: 1 FCBC at Westport, late.
Canvasback: only 2 FWC, typically low.
Redhead: max 6 Westport 17 Jan (JP,DS) to 4 there 20 Feb (MG).
Greater Scaup: max 228 FWC, near Plattsburgh.
Lesser Scaup: max 225 PCBC 3 wks earlier, coincidental?
Surf Scoter: WB 6 Dec (SO,TM,JP), a good find.
Black Scoter: subad drake Westport 1617 Jan (JP,DS,RW), a good find.
Oldsquaw: max 3 AP 3 Dec; Port Kent 16 Jan (JP,DS,RW); hen CH 20 Jan; drake CH 5 Feb (BK), a tough duck to find here.
Bufflehead: max 92 FWC.
Com. Goldeneye: max 1,309 FWC.
Barrow's Goldeneye: hen CH 20 Jan (BK,RH); drake AP 23 Jan (BK,CM) to 24 Jan (BK,GW), both good finds.
Hooded Merganser: still on 5th L 10 Dec (GL); 2 SLCBC, late inland; max 17 FWC; AP 20 Feb.
Com. Merganser: max 497 FWC.
Red-breasted Merganser: I Port Kent, 4 Westport 16 Jan (JP,DS,RW), uncommon here.

HAWKS-ALCIDS

Bald Eagle: at least 30, but perhaps some duplication, with reports from all 4 counties.
N. Harrier: 7 reported, a good winter.
Merlin: 3 Plattsburgh reports late Dec27 Feb, excellent.
Peregrine Falcon: Peru 15 Dec (GC); pr overwintered Willsboro eyrie (Amtrak "Adirondack" engineer).
Wild Turkey: max 30 ECBC; count week SLCBC, unusual; 20 Speculator feeder 28 Feb (PK); also Westport, Willboro, & CLIN.
Am. Coot: from 22 Nov Westport arr, increased to max 8 there 20 Feb (MG); also AP 26 Jan (CM), unusual here in winter.
Spotted Sandpiper: 1 Essex plowed field

19 Dec (RM,BM).
PARASITIC JAEGER: dark morph imm Westport 16 Jan (JP,DS,RW).

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS

Rock Dove: Speculator thru (PK), rare in HAMI.
Mourning Dove: max 244 NYS side of FCBC, mostly in Essex plowed fields, extremely high numbers here.
Long-eared Owl: 1 SLCBC on Mirror L Dr, Lake Placid, ESSE; another Saranac Lake, ESSE, yard 5 Jan (RH), excellent finds.
Belted Kingfisher: singles on 4 CBCs, reflects mild winter.
Three-toed Woodpecker: Halfway Bk on SLCBC, a good find.
Black-backed Woodpecker: FB 5 Dec (GL); L Durant 16 Dec (GL); also Halfway Bk on SLCBC.
N. Flicker: 3 FCBC; Pt au R 31 Jan (NO,MS), a good winter bird here.

FLYCATCHERS-WAXWINGS

N. Shrike: 13 reported, after relatively low 8 last winter.
Gray Jay: BB; FB; max 9 SLCBC.
Com. Raven: max 18 ECBC; CH 5 Dec,(BK), low, but not unprecedented.
Boreal Chickadee: FB 5 Dec (GL); 1 ECBC; 4 SLCBC, only reports.
Tufted Titmouse: pr overwintered Elizabethtown feeder (JP); 12 FCBC; 12 ECBC; 1 PCBC, a good winter.
Red-breasted Nuthatch: max 166 SLCBC.
Winter Wren: 1 ECBC at New Russia, 1st for count day.
Golden-crowned Kinglet: max 43 ECBC; 2 eating donuts & suet crumbs TL feeder daily from 7 Feb (CD), quite unusual.
Ruby-crowned Kinglet: 2 individuals FCBC found near Westport by 2 parties (TM,J&PT,RW), both excellent finds.
E. Bluebird: 11 FCBC & 11 ECBC, relatively low numbers.
Am. Robin: max 54 FCBC; 46 SLCBC & 50 Lake Placid 3 Feb (CC); 1 Avalanche Camp 16 Jan (J&PT); 2 Inlet 15 Feb (GL), strong numbers for higher elevations, along with reports from lower areas.
VARIED THRUSH: Saranac, CLIN, 21 Jan thru 28 Feb (BC,BK, C&JM, photo!), 1st Regional record.
GRAY CATBIRD: Moriah 6 Dec (TM,SO,JP), late but content, intro.
N. Mockingbird: 2 PCBC; eating crabapples former PAFB 20 Dec (NO,MS).
Bohemian Waxwing: mixed flock South Inlet 3 Dec (GL), uncommon in HAMI; 1 with 36 Cedar Waxwing SUNY Plattsburgh 16 Jan (BK); Plattsburgh 30 Jan (BK,CM), relatively low.
Cedar Waxwing: 18 ECBC; count week SLCBC, where scarce; feeding on winterberries TL 6 Jan (CD); feeding on cluster flies Elizabethtown farmhouse 12 Feb (JP); max 28 Westport 12 Feb (J&PT), the more common waxwing this winter, but hardly abundant.

WARBLERS

PINE WARBLER: TL feeder 8 Dec13 Jan, when temp fell to 25, fed on suet & niger seed (CD), 2nd Regional record, intro.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS

Song Sparrow: 1 PCBC, only report.
White-throated Sparrow: 1 PCBC; Speculator 26 Dec (PK); Peru feeder JanFeb (EF), only reports, but about normal.
WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW: overwintered Hogansburg feeder (HW), intro.
Lapland Longspur: North Farm Rd, CLIN, 10 Jan (BK,CM), always good.
Snow Bunting: 43 two Westport feeders 16 Jan (JP,DS,RW); Wadhams feeder 17 Jan (DS); hundreds Westport same day (JP,DS), count week SLCBC; 3 CLIN locations, unusual at feeders, but many fields were covered with an icy crust in mid-Jan.
Red-winged Blackbird: 1 PCBC, only report.
Rusty Blackbird: Redford 1 Dec (DF), a good winter find.
Com. Grackle: 2 SLCBC, only birds.
Purple Finch: max 29 SLCBC, smaller numbers thinly distributed across the 4

counties.
House Finch: recorded on 4 CBCs; max 83 PCBC; bird at Wadhams feeder 17 Jan (DS) had scarred eyes.
Red Crossbill: max 12 SLCBC; breeding several HAMI sites (GL).
White-winged Crossbill: max 13 SLCBC; 2 North Elba 16 Jan (J&PT); also breeding several HAMI sites (GL).
Com. Redpoll: max 70 FCBC; count week SLCBC; 15 TL roadside 9 Feb (CD), only reports.
Pine Siskin: 2 PCB; max 15 STCBC, only reports until birds appeared TL 7 Feb; 8th Lake 18 Feb; Speculator 21 Feb; Keene 27 Feb.
Am. Goldfinch: max 723 SLCBC, most abundant winter finch.
Evening Grosbeak: absent ECBC 1st time since 73; only 5 SLCBC; Inlet all winter (GL); max 50 TL 15 Feb (RB); 12 TL feeder 16 Feb (CD), the only documented reports, plus a few rumors.

ADDENDUM
BOREAL CHICKADEE: Saranac, CLIN, feeder 9 Jan 98 at end of the Great Ice Storm of 98 (BC).

REGION 8 - HUDSON-MOHAWK

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As reported from the Albany International Airport, December's mean temperature was 33.7°F, 7.2° above normal. Sunshine averaged 46%, 7% above normal. There was 1.04" of precipitation, 1.89" below normal, with only 3.2" of snow. January was a slightly warmer than normal month, averaging 21.8°. It was a cloudy month, with only 29% sunshine, 18% below normal. Precipitation was 4.78", 2.42" above normal, with 20.4" of snow. February was also warm, averaging 28.2°, 4.7° above normal, with a nearly normal 50% sunshine. Precipitation was again below normal, measuring 1.50", with 5.8" of snow.

Comments echo last year's, with generally open water during the early part of the season and good wild food crops. Birds remained dispersed throughout the period. The earlier CBCs had large numbers of lingering waterfowl. Bald Eagle again continued to winter locally in good numbers, with numbers of immature birds up from last year. Gulls were, as usual, concentrated in the Colonie landfill/Cohoes areas of the Hudson and Mohawk rivers, as well as the Catskill and Coxsackie areas. A Herring x Great-Blacked Gull hybrid spotted at the Colonie Landfill by Walter Ellison on February 20 provided interest for gull watchers.

Lingering landbirds were well represented on CBCs and at feeders. Greater Yellowlegs, E. Phoebe, House and Winter wrens, Hermit Thrush, Gray Catbird, Yellow-rumped and Pine warblers, Chipping, Field, Savannah, Fox, Swamp and White-crowned sparrows, and Baltimore

Oriole were reported, and a very surprising Osprey was on the Chatham count. The 130 species reported included 27 species of waterfowl, 12 species of hawks, 6 species of gulls, 7 species of owls, 9 species of sparrows, and 7 species of finches. Unusual birds reported included Tundra Swan, Eurasian Wigeon, Barrow's Goldeneye, Snowy Owl, and Long-eared Owl.

CONTRIBUTORS

Ken Able, Sue Adair, Elliott Adams, Alan Devoe Bird Club monthly sighting reports (ADBC), Kate Beale, Bob Boehm (Bbo), Carol Budliger, Robert Budliger, Paul Connor, Bill Cook, Walter Ellison, Craig Fosdick; Jane Graves; Hudson Mohawk Bird Club's Birdline of Eastern New York (BEN): William Lee; Andy Mason, Nancy Martin, Frank Murphy, Tom Palmer, Ray Perry, Barbara Putnam, Jim Sotis, Alison Van Keuren, Mark Wolfe, Robert Yunick.

ABBREVIATIONS

ACCBC - Albany County CBC, 20 Dec; CBL - Coxsackie Boat Launch, GREE; CCCBC – Catskill-Coxsackie CBC, 22 Dec; ChCBC - Chatham CBC, 19 Dec; CL - Collins Lake, SCHE; FPCBC – Fort Plain CBC, 27 Dec; FR - Five Rivers Environmental Education Center, Delmar, ALBA; FtE - Fort Edward area, WASH; FtM - Fort Miller, WASH; GCBC - Galway CBC, 2 Jan; GI - Green Island, ALBA; HFCBC - Hudson Falls CBC, 19 Dec; GL – Galway Lake, SARA; HR – Hudson River; JGCBC - Johnstown-Gloversville CBC, 27 Dec; L7 – Vischer Ferry Power Station/Lock 7 SCHE; MR – Mohawk River; NB – New Baltimore, GREE; NRP – Nott Rd. Park, Guilderland, ALBA; PP – Papscanee Preserve, RENS; SCBC – Salem CBC, 26 Dec; ScCBC - Schenectady CBC, 19 Dec; SI - Simmons Island, Cohoes, SARA; SL - Saratoga Lake, SARA; SNHP - Saratoga National Historical Park, SARA; SPd - Stanton Pond, ALBA; SRCBC - Southern Rensselaer CBC, 27 Dec; SSCBC - Saratoga Spa CBC, 19 Dec; StFl - Stillwater Flats (includes Saratoga Sod Farm), SARA; TCBC - Troy CBC, 2 Jan; TR - Tomhannock Reservoir, RENS.

LOONS-DUCKS

Com. Loon: 4 ACCBC; 1 SSCBC CW, only reports.

Pied-billed Grebe: 1 Hillsdale 2 Dec; 2 ACCBC; 1 ScCBC; 2 SSCBC; 1 TCBC.

Horned Grebe: 7 HFCBC; 2 L7 17 Jan, 1 still there 23 Jan.

Red-necked Grebe: 1 CCCBC, only report.

Double-crested Cormorant: 1 CCCBC,

only report.
Great Blue Heron: 32 on 10 CBCs; no Jan, 2 Feb reports.
Turkey Vulture: 1 Albany 7 Dec; 1 CCCBC.
Snow Goose: 12407 on 7 CBCs; high count 6604 SSCBC.
Canada Goose: high counts 9300 SCBC; 6677 CCCBC; 2000 HR T Schodack 24 Feb.
Mute Swan: max 101 CCCBC; 1 WR 12-19 Dec; 1 Schoharie Creek SCHE 29 Dec-19 Jan; 1 HR Stillwater 11, 30 Jan, 6, 10 Feb; 34 CBL 21 Feb; 24 Dutchman's Landing Catskill 27 Feb.
Tundra Swan: 11 GL 13 Dec (FM); 1 HR Stillwater 11, 13 Jan (RB); 3 lower Hoosic R RENS 7, 12, 16 Feb (JS, BEN).
Wood Duck: 4 on 3 CBCs.
Gadwall: 61 on 6 CBCs; high counts 30 SSCBC, 21 ACCBC.
Eurasian Wigeon: 1 ACCBC.
Am. Wigeon: 6 GL 13 Dec (FM); 7 ACCBC; 14 SCCBC; 3 L7 24 Dec.
Am. Black Duck: 3867 on 11 CBCs; high count 1618 SSCBC.
Mallard: 5152 on 11 CBCs; max 2177 SSCBC, 1323 FPCBC.
N. Pintail: 5 GL 13 Dec; 1 ACCBC; 11 SCCBC; 1 TCBC; 1 CL outlet Scotia 7 Jan; 1 L7 27, 29 Dec, 7 Jan.
N. Shoveler: 2 ACCBC; 38 CCCBC.
Green-winged Teal: 20 GL 13 Dec; 38 on 5 CBCs; max 33 ACCBC.
Canvasback: 1 L7 5 Dec; 250 Inbocht Bay GREE 13 Feb; 2 FtM 14 Feb; only reports.
Redhead: 2 GL 13 Dec; 1 TCBC; 2 Crescent 18 Jan; 11-12 HR Stillwater 6, 10 Feb .
Ring-necked Duck: 10 GL 13 Dec; 65 ACCBC; 31 CCCBC; 23 SSCBC; 2 SRCBC; 12 HR Stillwater 30 Jan, unusual numbers for that date.
Greater Scaup: 4 GL 13 Dec; 20 SSCBC; 3 Cohoes Commons 18 Jan; 4 HR Stillwater 30 Jan-27 Feb.
Lesser Scaup: 40 SCBC; 1 CCCBC CW; 1 HR Stillwater 30 Jan.
White-winged Scoter: 1 L7 28 Dec-23 Jan, moved to Tibbets Ave 24 Jan.
Oldsquaw: 2 ACCBC; 1 L7 17-23 Jan (RY).
Bufflehead: 3 GL 13 Dec; 8 ACCBC; 3 SSCBC; 1 GI 18 Jan.
Com. Goldeneye: 776 on 6 CBCs; max 58 ACCBC; 31 MR Colonie 18 Jan; 125 HR Stillwater 30 Jan, displaying.
Barrow's Goldeneye: 1 ad m HR Stillwater 6 Feb (WE, NM).
Hooded Merganser: 508 on 5 CBCs; max 385 SSCBC; 4 HR Stillwater 1 Jan; 8 lower Hoosic R RENS 7 Feb; 8 Brant L 15 Feb; pr GI 27 Feb; 1 overwintered L7.
Com. Merganser: high counts 250 Nassau L 20 Dec; 907 SSCBC, 352 ScCBC; 80 Colonie 18 Jan.
Red-breasted Merganser: 1 TCBC; 1 GI 10 Jan, presumably same bird.
Ruddy Duck: 3 Nassau L 2 Dec; 25 GL 113 Dec; max 179 ACCBC.

HAWKS-ALCIDS

Osprey: 1 ChCBC.
Bald Eagle: 9 ad, 2 imm on 5 CBCs; at least 16 ad, 12 imm HR, MR, L George, Battenkill R, Hoosic R all season; no reports from Conklingville Dam.
N. Harrier: 133 on 11 CBCs; 9 Coxsackie 12 Dec; 17 present FtE thru; 6 BCM area 18 Feb; 25 reports of singles.
Sharp-shinned Hawk: 42 on 10 CBCs; 21 reports of singles.
Cooper's Hawk: 30 on 10 CBCs; 22 reports of singles.
N. Goshawk: 1 imm PP 15 Dec (MW); 1 JGCBC; 1 ScCBC; 2 SSCBC; 1 TCBC.
Red-shouldered Hawk: 1 CCCBC; 1 SSCBC CW; 1 Austerlitz 8 Jan (ADBC); 1 ad, 1 imm Saratoga 5 Feb (G. Hanson); 1 Saratoga 7 Feb (BP); 1 Grapeville GREE 7 Feb, pair observed in area 27 Jan, 4, 27 Feb (PC).
Red-tailed Hawk: max 122 FPCBC; 101 TCBC.
Rough-legged Hawk: 29 on 9 CBCs; 12 FtE 8, 31 Jan; 3 T Canajoharaie 23 Jan; 2 Rt. 146 T Clifton Pk 24 Jan; 20 Coxsackie 31 Jan; 3 Blatnik Pk, 2 T Duanesburg SCHE (RP); 15 reports of singles.
Am. Kestrel: 39 on 10 CBCs; 18 reports of singles.
Merlin: 1 CCCBC; 1 GI 18 Jan (WE, NM);

1 SUNYA 12 Feb, same bird Guilderland 20, 28 Feb (WE, NM); 1 probable Schenectady 16 Feb (WL).
Peregrine Falcon: 1 ACCBC; 1 SCBC; 2 SRCBC; 1 TCBC; 1 MR Crescent 27 Dec (WL); 1 MR Colonie 27, 28 Dec; 1 Albany 30 Dec; 1 imm Rip Van Winkle Bridge 30 Jan (BC); 1 Slingerlands 16 Feb (AV); 1 2nd yr f SI 27 Feb.
Ring-necked Pheasant: 1 CCCBC, only report.
Ruffed Grouse: 48 on 11 CBCs; no other reports (except for 1 being eaten by Cooper's Hawk).
Wild Turkey: high counts 114 ChCBC, 284 FPCBC.
Am. Coot: 2 CCCBC; 3 HFBCB; 11 SCBC; 1 ScCBC; 2 GI/Crescent Dam 18 Jan, 20, 27 Feb (WE); 2 L7 10 Jan (WL).
Killdeer: 6 CCCBC; 1 ScCBC; 1 heard Crescent 17 Jan (RY); arr Guilderland 18 Feb.
Greater Yellowlegs: 1 FPCBC.
Com. Snipe: 1 CCCBC; 1 CL outlet 26 Dec (RY).
Am. Woodcock: 1 CCCBC CW; 1 HFCBC.
Ring-billed Gull: max 953 CCCBC; 300 Dutchman's Landing Catskill 13 Feb.
Herring Gull: 1400 MR Colonie 5 Dec; max 1658 ACCBC; 1577 CCCBC; 1494 TCBC; 2000 MR Colonie 20 Feb, 1270 still present 27 Feb.
Glaucous Gull: 1 ACCBC; 4 TCBC.
Iceland Gull: 2 MR Colonie 5 Dec; 3 ACCBC; 3 CCCBC; 1 ScCBC; 2 TCBC; 1 imm Crescent 7 Jan; 4 CBL 7 Feb (CF); 1 PP 11 Feb (MW); 1 Coxsackie 27 Feb.
Lesser Black-backed Gull: 1 Crescent 27 Dec; 7 Jan (WE); 1 ad Colonie landfill 27 Dec (RY); 1 TCBC; 1 Colonie 20 Feb (WE).
Great Black-backed Gull: 250 MR Colonie 5 Dec; max 612 TCBC; 400 MR Colonie 20 Feb, 265 27 Feb.

DOVES-WOODPECKERS

Rock Dove: high counts 1544 HFCBC; 1296 TCBC; 1033 ScCBC.
Mourning Dove: high counts 903 SSCBC; 744 ScCBC; singing began 10 Feb.
E. Screech-Owl: 34 on 9 CBCs; 1 Schodack Ctr. 11 Dec (PC); 1 Tygert Marsh 21 Feb, only reports.
Great Horned Owl: 58 on 9 CBCs; max 15 GCBC; 15 other reports.
Snowy Owl: 1 Glenville 19 Jan (fide RY); 1 Rt. 146 T Clifton Pk. 19 Jan (RY).
Barred Owl: 7 on 4 CBCs; 1 PP 11 Feb (MW), only reports.
Short-eared Owl: 10 FtE 16 Dec (BP); 10 FPCBC; 16 HFCBC; 2 ScCBC (Meadowdale); 1 Krumkill Rd. ALBA 21 Jan.
Long-eared Owl: 1 Gallupville 14 Dec-mid Feb (Bbo).
N. Saw-Whet Owl: 2 JGCBC, only report.
Belted Kingfisher: 40 on 11 CBCs; max 7 FPCBC; 4 Jan, 2 Feb reports.
Red-bellied Woodpecker: 98 on 12 CBCs, high count 35 ChCBC; 13 reports of singles, inclu. 1 overwintering at Berne feeder.
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: 1 NB 4 Dec; 2 CCCBC; 1 ACCBC; 1 Austerlitz 1 Jan (ADBC).
Downy Woodpecker: 655 on 11 CBCs; max 116 ChCBC; 11 NRP 20 Feb.
Hairy Woodpecker: 165 on 11 CBCs; max 26 FPCBC.
N. Flicker: 140 on 11 CBCs; max 29 CCCBC; 3 Jan, 6 Feb reports; max 5 E. River Rd. RENS 24 Feb.
Pileated Woodpecker: 76 on 11 CBCs; max 10 JGCBC; 18 reports of singles.

FLYCATCHERS-WAXWINGS

E. Phoebe: 1 ACCBC, only report.
N. Shrike: 6 on 5 CBCs; 3 reports of singles.
Blue Jay: 2050 on 11 CBCs, numbers down from last year.
Am. Crow: max 12690 TCBC.
Fish Crow: 1 ACCBC; 1 CCCBC; 10 TCBC; 5 Jan, 11 Feb reports.
Com. Raven: 17 on 6 CBCs; continues to be widely reported throughout Region.
Horned Lark: 1496 on 7 CBCs; max 761 TCBC; numbers up from last year.
Black-capped Chickadee: max 758 JGCBC, 623 ScCBC; 588 ChCBC; 519 CCCBC; 37 NRP 20 Feb; no irruption JL.
Tufted Titmouse: max 154 ScCBC; 129 CCCBC; 18 NRP 20 Feb; continues at JL.

Red-breasted Nuthatch: 139 on 11 CBCs; max 69 JGCBC.
White-breasted Nuthatch: max 96 CCCBC.
Brown Creeper: 45 on 10 CBCs; singing BCM 6 Feb; NRP 20 Feb.
Carolina Wren: none reported on CBCs; 1 NB 3, 25 Dec; 1 Delmar 18 Jan; 2 NB 23 Jan; 1 FR 31 Jan; 1 McKownville ALBA 12 Feb; 1 NRRS 28 Feb; 1 coming to feeder Schenectady thru (SA).
House Wren: 1 ScCBC.
Winter Wren: 1 NB 3 Dec; 1 VF 4, 5 Dec; 1 PISP 5 Dec; 1 ACCBC; 1 CCCBC; 1 ScCBC; 1 NR 7 Jan; 1 NRP 20 Feb.
Golden-crowned Kinglet: 283 on 11 CBCs; max 53 ACCBC; numbers up significantly from last year thru winter.
Ruby-crowned Kinglet: 1 Austerlitz 12 Dec; 1 CCCBC; 1 ScCBC.
E. Bluebird: 504 on 11 CBCs; max 101 SCBC; excellent numbers thru.
Hermit Thrush: 1 JGCBC.
Am. Robin: max 3502 CCCBC; 2503 ScCBC; 1763 ChCBC; wintered widely; singing SCHE 20 Feb; arr SARA 21 Feb.
Gray Catbird: 1 ACCBC.
N. Mockingbird: 69 on 9 CBCs; 2 Jan, 7 Feb reports.
European Starling: high count 10,279 SRCBC.
Cedar Waxwing: high counts 397 SCCBC; 232 ACCBC; 218 CCCBC.

WARBLERS

Yellow-rumped Warbler: 29 CCCBC; 1 JGCBC; 1 Amsterdam 24, 27 Dec; 1 NB 27 Jan.
Pine Warbler: 1 Slingerlands 27 Jan-at least 10 Jan (D. Martin to BEN); 1 CCCBC.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS

N. Cardinal: high counts 111 TCBC; 109 SCCBC; 20 at feeder Guilderland 21, 23 Jan; singing Schenectady 17 Jan, Saratoga 9 Feb.
Am. Tree Sparrow: high counts 865 TCBC; 625 SSCBC; 424 FPCBC; 420 SCBC; numbers up from last year.
Chipping Sparrow: 1 ChCBC.
Field Sparrow: 1 CCCBC; 1 TCBC, only reports.
Savannah Sparrow: 1 SSCBC.
Fox Sparrow: 1 NB 12 Jan (BEN); 1 S. Bethlehem 31 Jan (CB, RB).
Song Sparrow: 121 on 10 CBCs; high count 24 SCCBC.
Swamp Sparrow: 2 VF 6 Dec; 2 CCCBC; 2 ScCBC; 2 SSCBC; 1 Embought Rd. GREE 13 Feb.
White-throated Sparrow: max 124 CCCBC; 99 ScCBC; 75 ACCBC.
White-crowned Sparrow: 1 SCBC; 1 imm Blackhouse Rd. FtE 10 Feb (WL), overwintered.
Dark-eyed Junco: max 802 TCBC; 588 CCCBC; 446 ChCBC.
Lapland Longspur: 1 T Canajoharie 23 Jan; 3 T FtE 27 Jan, only reports.
Snow Bunting: max 91 FPCBC; 80 Brookview RENS 11 Jan (PC); 60 Gansevoort 23 Jan (BP).
Red-winged Blackbird: 317 on 8 CBCs; 1 overwintered Guilderland (WE); 200+ Brookview RENS 16 Feb (PC).
E. Meadowlark: 1 S. Rensselaer 6 Dec, only report.
Com. Grackle: 6 CCCBC; arr 6+ Brookview RENS 22 Feb (PC).
Brown-headed Cowbird: 146 on 4 CBCs; arr 43 Brookview RENS 16 Feb (PC).
Baltimore Oriole: 1 Greenport 18 Dec (BC).
Purple Finch: 24 on 7 CBCs; no Jan, Feb reports.
House Finch: max 429 ScCBC; 341 CCCBC; 351 TCBC; scarce at feeders.
Pine Grosbeak: 5 JGCBC, only report.
Red Crossbill: 1 roadkill Rt 8 T Johnsburg WARR 14 Feb (RY), L.c. minor.
Com. Redpoll: 1 JGCBC.
Pine Siskin: no reports.
Am. Goldfinch: max 283 ChCBC; 224 ScCBC, good numbers.
Evening Grosbeak: 66 JGCBC; 12 Warrensburg 27 Feb, only reports.
House Sparrow: max 421 TCBC; 369 CCCBC.

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REGION 9 - HUDSON - DELAWARE

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December was dry. Many parts of the Region had under an inch of precipitation. January made up for it. Over 6 inches of precipitation fell over most of the Region, twice the average amount. The first two weeks of the year were cold, but mild throughout the rest of the season. Similar to last year, the lower sections of the Region had nearly no snow and the northern parts of the Region reported most snow was gone weeks earlier than in a normal winter.

By far the best birds of the season were three **Mountain Bluebirds** found in December. Curiously, all were females and spread out across Region 9 in Westchester, Dutchess and Orange counties. The Westchester and Dutchess birds stayed for a month.

The numbers of Great Cormorants continue to increase on the Hudson and inland sites. A Great Egret lingered long enough to be counted on the East Orange CBC. Eurasian Wigeon returned to Premium Mill Pond in Larchmont and stayed for the winter. A Semipalmated Plover was found on the Bronx-West CBC in Larchmont, the count's second record.

Red-headed Woodpecker sightings continue to increase, with an immature spending most of the winter and early spring in Croton Point Park.

There were good numbers of Northern Shrike reports, though none seem to stay put for any length of time.

Five species of warblers were found on the Westchester side of the Bronx-Westchester CBC. They included Yellow-rumped, Palm, Ovenbird, Common Yellowthroat and Yellow-breasted Chat. An Orange-crowned Warbler was found on the Peekskill count.

Other season highlights include Sora, Scarlet Tanager, and Rose-breasted Grosbeak.

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ABBREVIATIONS

BAFT-Bedford Audubon Field Trip, CPP-Croton Point Park, DCCBC-Dutchess County Christmas Bird Count, EGR-Edith G. Read Wildlife Sanctuary, EOCBC- Eastern Orange Christmas Bird Count, GA-Galeville Airport, GSCBC- Grennich-Stamford Christmas Bird Count, JBNHS-John Burroughs Natural History Society, LHVBL-Lower Hudson Valley Bird Line, MRG- Mianus River Gorge, PCBC-Peekskill Christmas Bird Count, PCCBC-Putnum County Christmas Bird Count, PP-Piermont Pier, RCCBC-Rockland County Christmas Bird Count, RTWBC-Ralph T. Waterman Bird Club, SCCBC- Sullivan County Christmas Bird Count, SOCBC-Southern Orange Christmas Bird Count.

LOONS-DUCKS

Red-throated Loon: 1 PP 6 Dec; 11 BWCBC 27 Dec.
Com. Loon: 2 Croton Res 31 Jan.
Horned Grebe: 3 Lake Gleneida 10 Jan; 1 Poughkeepsie 10 Jan; 1 Sylvan Lake 5,23,29 Jan; 1 Croton Res 31 Jan.
Red-necked Grebe: 1 EGR 5 Dec; 1 EGR 27 Dec(BWCBC); 1 Larchmont 27 Dec (BWCBC).
N. Gannet: 1 EGR 27 Dec (BWCBC); few EGR 27 Feb.
Great Cormorant: 1 Rockland Lake 6 Dec; 15 Peekskill 16 Jan; 6 Verplank 6 Feb; 8 Jones Piont 8 Feb.
Great Blue Heron: 26 Rye 27 Dec (BWCBC)
Great Egret: 1 Tomahawk Lake ORAN 13-19 Dec (LHVBL,EOCBC).
Black Vulture: 1 Putnam Lake 6 Dec; 1 ORAN 26 Dec; 6 Greenwood Lake 2 Jan; 1 Iona I 16 Jan; 2 Stony Point 16 Jan; 2 Thompkins Cove 4 Feb; 9 New Paltz 7 Feb; 1 Bear Mt 12 Feb; 4 Iona I 15 Feb.
Greater White-fronted Goose: 1 Walkill 10 Jan (LHVBL).
Snow Goose: 1 blue phase, 2 snow Round Pond DUTC 2-7 Jan; 1 Walkill 10 Jan.
Eurasian Wigeon: 1 Larchmont 5 Dec- 21 Jan, 15 Feb; 2 Tarrytown Lakes 12 Dec(LHVBL)
Blue-winged Teal: 2 Amawalk Res 19 Dec, PCBC.
N. Shoveler: 30 Rockland Lake 6 Dec.
N. Pintail: 2 Newburgh 13 Dec.
Canvasback: 200 PP 6 Dec; 52 year low for BWCBC
Redhead: 1 EGR 4 Jan; 2-3 Abel's Pond DUTC 23 Jan, 27-28 Feb.
Ring-necked Duck: numerous reports
Greater Scaup: good numbers at EGR
Lesser Scaup: 1225 EGR 27 Dec, record number (BWCBC)
Surf Scoter: few EGR 5 Dec.
White-winged Scoter: few EGR 5 Dec; 2 DUTC 17-18 Dec (CV).
Black Scoter: few EGR 5 Dec.
Oldsquaw: 1 Round Pond DUTC Dec-Jan (MV,DF,LHVBL).
Bufflehead: 6 PP 6 Dec.
Com. Goldeneye: 1 PP 6 Dec.
Hooded Merganser: 60 Tarrytown Lakes 12 Dec; 65 Newburgh 13 Dec.
Ruddy Duck: 300 PP 6 Dec; good numbers in early Dec.

HAWKS-ALCIDS

Bald Eagle: well reported from Hudson River; 25 Rio Res 6-7 Feb (BAFT)
N. Goshawk: 1 MRG 20 Dec (GSCBC); 1 MC 27 Dec- 24 Jan (BWCBC); 1 PUTN 2 Jan (PCCBC); 1 Wawarsing SULL 25 Jan.
Red-shouldered Hawk: few present in WEST, DUTC, SULL; 1 PUTN 2 Jan (PCCBC).
Rough-legged Hawk: 1 CPP 16 Jan; 8 Pine Island 16 Jan; 1 Walkill NWR 27 Feb; 2 Rombout Rd DUTC 6-16 Jan; 4 Walkill NWR 7 Feb; 1 Swan L SULL 9 Feb.
Golden Eagle: 1 Stissing Mt 2 Jan; 1 Stone Ridge ULST 1 Jan (LHVBL); 3 Stissing Mt 24, 31 Jan; 1 WEST 22 Feb; 1 Claryville 26, 27 Feb.
Am. Kestrel: 3 CPP 16 Jan.
Merlin: 1 ROCK 19 Dec (RCCBC); 1 Blue Chip Farm 10 Jan (LHVBL).
Peregrine Falcon: 1 DUTC 19 Dec (DCCBC); 1 Rye 27 Dec (BWCBC); 1 Poughkeepsie 11 Jan (AM,BM); 1 Kensico Res 24 Jan.
Ruffed Grouse: 1 Yonkers 27 Dec (BWCBC).
Clapper Rail: 1 Larchmont 27 Dec (BWCBC).
Sora: 1 PP 7 Jan (LHVBL).
Am. Coot: 2 PP 6 Dec.
Semipalmated Plover: 1 Larchmont 27 Dec (BWCBC, PL).
Killdeer: common in Dec WEST; 2 DUTC 12 Feb.
Am. Oystercatcher: 2 EGR 27 Dec (BWCBC).
Purple Sandpiper: 100 Manor Park, Larchmont 5 Dec.
Am. Woodcock: 1 DUTC 18 Feb.
Iceland Gull: 1 Eastchester 27 Dec (BWCBC); 1-3 Woodbourne 3,4, 13 Feb.
Lesser Black-backed Gull: 1 PP 19 Dec (RCCBC); 1 ORAN 26 Dec (SOCBC); 1 Woodbourne 4 Feb.
Glaucous Gull: 1 Beacon 6 Jan (AM,BM); 1 Woodbourne 4, 15 Feb (LHVBL).

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS

Barred Owl: 1 MRG 20 Dec (GSCBC).
Short-eared Owl: 1 CPP 19 Dec (PCBC); 6 State Line Road, ORAN 21 Dec; 2 CPP 20 Jan; 3 GA 31 Jan; 7 Walkill NWR 27 Feb.
N. Saw-whet Owl: 1 MRG 20 Dec (GSCBC); 2 Youngsville 2 Feb; 1 Vassar Farms 14 Feb.
Red-headed Woodpecker: 1 CPP 19 Dec-25 Feb (PCBC, LHVBL)); count period bird for EOCBC; 1 Wallkill 31 Jan; 2 Summitville early Feb.

FLYCATCHERS-WAXWINGS

E. Phoebe: 1 DUTC 1 Jan (BMa).
N. Shrike: 1 Stormville 19 Dec (DCCBC); 1 Bashakill 27 Dec (SCCBC); 1 Wurtsboro 27 Dec (SCCBC); 1 PUTN 2 Jan (PCCBC); 1 Cochecton 2 Jan; 1 Rombout Rd DUTC 11-12 Feb (CV); 1 Swan Lake SULL 11-13 Feb; 1 Rockefeller SP 19 Feb.
Fish Crow: 2 Thompkins Cove 4 Feb.
Com. Raven: 1 Rockland Lake 19 Dec (RCCBC); 6 PUTN 2 Jan (PCCBC) 30 Blue Hill Road SULL 14 Feb.
Horned Lark: 8 EGR 5 Dec; 430 ORAN 26 Dec (SOCBC)..
Red-breasted Nuthatch: handfull of reports from SULL; 1 DUTCH 6-8 Jan, 5-6 Feb (MK).
House Wren: 1 Purchase 20 Dec.
MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRD: 1 Purchase 20 Dec -20 Jan (BW, JU); 1 Middletown 20 Dec- 1 Jan; 1 Northeast 26 Dec-7 Jan, 27 Jan (EA,RN,LHVBL)
Am. Robin: 2000 Newburgh 31 Jan (LHVBL).
Am. Pipit: few EGR 5 Dec; 60 ORAN 26 Dec (SOCBC); 28 CPP 4 Jan.

WARBLERS

Orange-crowned Warbler: 1 EGR 13 Dec (LHVBL); 1 CPP 19 Dec (PCBC).
Yellow-rumped warbler: well reported in most counties
Palm Warbler: 1 Yonkers 27 Dec (BWCBC)..
Ovenbird: 1 EGR 27 Dec (BWCBC).
Com. Yellowthroat: 1 EGR 13 Dec (LHVBL); 2 WEST 27 Dec (BWCBC).
Yellow-breasted Chat: 1 EGR 27 Dec (BWCBC).

TANAGERS-WEAVERS

SCARLET TANAGER: 1 CPP 19-20 Dec (PCBC).
Chipping Sparrow: 2 ROCK 19 Dec (RCCBC); 2 Putnam Valley 27 Feb (LHVBL).
White-crowned Sparrow: 29 ORAN 26 Dec (SOCBC); 1 DUTC 6 Dec (MV).
Lapland Longspur: 1 ORAN 26 Dec (SOCBC); 1 Winchell Mt Road DUTC 24 Jan (LHVBL).
Snow Bunting: few EGR 5 Dec; 128 near Stewart Airport 19 Dec (EOCBC); 30 MC 24 Jan; 60 Baird Park 13 Jan (AP).
Rose-breasted Grosbeak: 1 Hi View DUTC 6 Dec (AM, BM).
Rusty Blackbird: 1 DUTC 19 Dec (DCCBC).
Pine Siskin: 1 FDR Park 19 Dec, PCBC; 15 Parksville early Jan; 2 Swan Lake SULL 2 Jan; 1 Claryville 3 Jan; no reports after 3 Jan.
Evening Grosbeak: 1 Amawalk Res 17 Dec, PCBC

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REGION 10-MARINE

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December was the second warmest and the seventh driest on record, with new record highs of 74° on 4 December and 79° on 7 December. January's weather was also warm, almost 2.5° more than normal. It was also very wet; 6.99 inches precipitation fell against a norm of 3.42. February was over 5 degrees warmer than normal with about normal precipitation. These were all measured at the center for weather records at New York City. The warm winter gave us rain and little snow that rapidly melted.

To illustrate the variation through the Region, on 25 February two low pressure systems converged off the coast blanketing New England with snow, but merely brushing the Region. However, although New York City received no snow, the storm left 12 inches on the ground at Montauk, with lesser amounts as one moved west. At the Nassau/Suffolk County border and to the west it was all rain.

The Southern Nassau Christmas Bird Count, on the last day of the count period, experienced torrential rains and wind. The count total was the lowest in 50 years and the day was a birding experience worse than the "big fog" day of two year's ago. However, most Christmas counts in the Region occurred early in the period when the weather was relatively

mild. A long list of very late migrants and/or unusual wintering birds resulted. Some of these birds remained into the Winter. They included **Cattle Egret, Western Kingbird,** Eastern Phoebe, **Blue-Gray Gnatcatcher, Nashville Warbler,** Pine Warbler, **Northern Waterthrush** and Common Yellowthroat.

A **SANDHILL CRANE** was discovered 29 December and spent the winter in the fields surrounding Orient Village. Previous wintering cranes in the Region occurred on the South Fork during 1994-1995 and 1996-1997.

Parking field No. 6 at Jones Beach attracts numerous gulls on the beach in front of the concession building, probably because of feeding by visitors. Both Lesser Black-backed and Iceland gulls were seen there throughout the winter. On Sunday 31 January a **BLACK-TAILED GULL** was found late in the afternoon on the beach by Andy Guthrie and Angus Wilson. The bird remained all day Monday, 1 February. This rarity from the western Pacific has also been seen this winter in New Jersey, Maryland, and Texas. **This is a first record for New York State.** The bird was seen by numerous observers, from as close as 10 feet when it joined the dozens of Ring-billed Gulls waiting for a handout on the parking lot. It was photographed both days and pictures appeared on the internet as early as Wednesday.

On 31 January, Tom Burke discovered an odd small, immature gull at the Shinnecock Inlet. It was identified by Tony Lauro as a 1st winter **"COMMON" GULL.** This is the popular English name for *Larus c. canus,* shown on the official NYS checklist as Mew Gull. This subspecies breeds in northwestern Europe. The subspecies *L. c. brachyrhynchus* breeds in Alaska and northwestern Canada and winters on our west coast. For a more complete discussion, refer to DiCostanzo in *Bull's Birds of New York State (1998, p.280).*

A male **Brewer's Blackbird** was found by John Stonick at his feeder on Staten Island on 31 Jan (confirmed by Henry J. Flamm and Cliff Hagen). It had been traveling with a small group of Brown-headed Cowbirds and Red-winged Blackbirds and remained though the season. The bird was singing as spring approached.

A **"Black" Brant** was spotted in a Brant flock gathering off the Jones Beach West End Coast Guard Station on 10 December and then 22 January. Another **"Black" Brant** was on the Riis Park golf course 25 January to 2 February.

A **Red Phalarope** appeared at Shinnecock 16 to 17 January .

Alcids this season consisted of Black Guillemot seen on Christmas counts in Brooklyn and Montauk; Razorbill mostly from Montauk and in

occasional small numbers as far west as eastern Nassau Co; Common Murre and Dovekie only from Montauk.

The only Snowy Owl for the season was one reported from Staten Island, at Arden Heights, on Friday 18 December, the day before the Christmas count. As for other owls, Pelham Bay Park continues to be the place with Great Horned Owl, Northern Saw-whet Owl, Long-eared Owl and Barn Owl, reported starting in early December. By mid February Great Horned Owls were on the nest in most breeding locations. Eastern Screech-Owls also occur in these same heavily wooded areas.

Ten Red-headed Woodpeckers remained in Central Park for most of the winter, an extraordinary number for this locally uncommon bird, with nine remaining at season's end. Four more wintered on the east end of Long Island.

Other unusual winter birds included Eared Grebe, Greater White-fronted Goose, Tufted Duck, Barrow's Goldeneye, Western Kingbird and Northern Shrike.

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ABBREVIATIONS

B-Brooklyn; BX-Bronx; C-Captree; CBC-Christmas Bird Count; CP-Central Park; CLP-Clove Lake Park, SI; CRSPConnetquot River State Park; CS-Central Suffolk; FI-Fire Island; GI-Gardiner's Island; GKP-Great Kills Park, SI; JBWR-Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge; JBCH-Jones Beach; JBWE-Jones Beach West End; LI-Long Island; M-Montauk; MOB-Many Observers; MASS-Massapequa Preserve; MP-Montauk Point; NN-Northern Nassau; O-Orient, PBP- Pelham Bay Park; PL-Point Lookout side Jones Inlet; PP-Prospect Park; Q-Queens, QW-Quogue /Water Mill, S-Smithtown; SG-Sagaponack; SHIN-Shinnecock Inlet; SI-Staten Island; VCP-Van Cortlandt Park, Bronx.

LOONS-DUCKS

Red-necked Grebe: half dozen from PL to MP.
Eared Grebe: Star Island 5 Dec (JA).
Great Egret: 7 JBCH 20 Dec, others.
Snowy Egret: no reports.
Tricolored Heron: a few from CBC, some located later at same locations.
Cattle Egret: Riverhead early to 13 Dec.
Glossy Ibis: no reports.
Turkey Vulture: Muttontown 3 Dec; West Bronx, BX CBC 27 Dec; CP 1 Feb; Calverton 5 Feb, others.
Greater White-fronted Goose: 2 and possibly 3 individuals on ponds Patchogue to Hook Pond early Jan thru; there was a "pink-billed (western NA?) and an orange-billed (Greenland?) bird on Hook Pond.
Snow Goose: one or more "blue morph" found in many wintering flocks, considerable increase over recent years.
Brant: Black morph JBWE 10 Dec, 22 Jan; Riis Park 25 Jan - 2 Feb.
Tundra Swan: up to 8 Hook Pond, East Hampton mid Dec thru; 14 in field with Canada geese Cutchogue 15 Feb.
Wood Duck: wintering birds more numerous and more widely scattered, NY parks to eastern LI. .
Eurasian Wigeon: wintering birds numerous and widely scattered.
Blue-winged Teal: mostly on various CBC.
Green-winged Teal: Eurasian form JBWR 22 Jan.
Tufted Duck: Patchogue early Jan - mid Feb; Southampton/Halsey Neck Pond 6 Feb thru.
King Eider: 4 off Crooks Pt SI CBC 19 Dec; small numbers at MP; a few others on east end.
Com. Eider: a few hundred wintered at MP rather than the thousands of recent years.
Harlequin Duck: wintered MP; Ditch Plains; PL; Atlantic Beach.
Surf Scoter: 2500 MP 3 Jan.
White-winged Scoter: 8000+ M CBC 19 Dec: 10,000 MP 3 Jan.
Black Scoter: 800 MP 3 Jan.
Barrow's Goldeneye: S CBC 27 Dec; Bayville, LI 21 Dec - mid Feb.

HAWKS-ALCIDS

Osprey: CRSP 20 Dec; Mill Neck NN CBC 27 Dec.
Bald Eagle: 2 imm GI, M CBC 19 Dec; PL 31 Jan; SHIN 27 Feb.
Rough-legged Hawk: 5 B CBC 19 Dec; 5 GI M CBC 19 Dec.
Wild Turkey: 57 GI, M CBC 19 Dec; 2 VCP 27 Dec-mid Jan.
Clapper Rail: B CBC 19 Dec; PBP 27 Dec.
Virginia Rail: B CBC 19 Dec; Su Swamp 26 Dec; others in marshes on east end.
SANDHILL CRANE: Orient Point fields 29 Dec on (MOB).
Semipalmated Plover: 4 JBCH 6 Feb (RK).
Piping Plover: SHIN 12 Feb.
Am.Oystercatcher: 25 wintered in Jones Inlet, others at JBWR.
Lesser Yellowlegs: FI, C CBC 20 Dec, 4 MASS 3 Jan.
Whimbrel: West Marina, PL seen and calling 5 Feb! (RG).
Marbled Godwit: 8 along Wantagh Pkwy N. of JBCH 5 Dec.
Least Sandpiper: Hog Creek 19 Dec (JA); details to CBC compiler.
Pectoral Sandpiper: Aquebogue 7 Dec (AB).
Purple Sandpiper: jetties Atlantic Beach, PL/JBCH, SHIN and MP.
Long-billed Dowitcher: 4 JBWR thru early Dec; 6 JBWR B CBC 19 Dec; 2 MASS till Feb; SG 8-10 Feb.
RED PHALAROPE: SHIN 16-17 Jan
Laughing Gull: JBWR B CBC 19 Dec.
Little Gull: none until mid Mar.
Black-headed Gull: SI; PL; SHIN; a few others.
BLACK-TAILED GULL: JBCH 31 Jan-1 Feb (AG,AnW), first NY State record.
MEW GULL: nominate subspecies SHIN 31 Jan on! (TB, AL).
THAYER'S GULL: possible ad MP 9 Jan (AG, AnW); 2nd year Fort Pond 9 Jan! (HM).
Iceland Gull: 12+ on CBC; wintered on ocean shores SI to MP.

Lesser Black-backed Gull: 16 at landfill SI CBC 19 Dec; others.
Glaucous Gull: SI CBC 19 Dec; others during season at PL, SHIN, Hook Pond and MP.
Glaucous Gull X Herring Gull hybrid: MP 12 Dec (HM,AB,DF),
Black-legged Kittiwake: FI 20 Dec; 40 MP 3 Jan.
Caspian Tern: GKP 17 Jan.
Forster's Tern: PL 16 Feb thru.
Dovekie: 4 MP 3 Jan (AB); 2 MP 17 Jan.
Com. Murre: MP 17 Jan
Razorbill: FI 20 Dec; MP from mid Dec; 600+ MP 3 Jan, a high count for the state.
Black Guillemot: B CBC 19 Dec, MP M CBC 20 Dec.

PIGEONS-WOODPECKERS

Great Horned Owl: nesting was reported from most localities where they are resident by mid Feb.
Snowy Owl: Arden Heights, SI 18 Dec, only report for Region.
Long-eared Owl: wintered CP, PBP.
Short-eared Owl: only a few.
N. Saw-whet Owl: wintered PBP, M CBC 19 Dec.
Red-headed Woodpecker: 10 wintered CP, 4 wintered Eastern LI.

FLYCATCHERS-WAXWINGS

E. Phoebe: CRSP 20 Dec; others; Bridgehampton 19 Feb, probably a migrant.
Western Kingbird: Riverhead 10 Dec - mid Feb.
N. Shrike: GI M CBC 19 Dec; Riverhead 10 Dec - 8 Feb.
White-eyed Vireo: Big Reed Pond, Montauk 12 Dec (DF).
Tree Swallow: a few wintering birds at PL, JBCH etc.
Red-breasted Nuthatch: very few wintered in the region.
Golden-crowned Kinglet: 79 NN CBC 27 Dec; 55 SG CBC 20 Dec; larger numbers than usual in other areas.
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: Babylon, C CBC 20 Dec.
Cedar Waxwing: 218 M CBC 19 Dec; 332 SG CBC 20 Dec; both are very high winter numbers for the coastal areas.

WARBLERS

Orange-crowned Warbler: 7 on CBC; others.
Nashville Warbler: Riverdale, BX CBC 27 Dec.
Pine Warbler: 2 PP 12 Dec; 4 SI CBC 19 Dec; 2 B CBC 19 Dec; GI M CBC 19 Dec; feeder Roslyn Heights, 2 Jan; PP 2 Jan..
N. Waterthrush: Oakland Lake, Q CBC 19 Dec.
Com. Yellowthroat: Oakland Lake, Q CBC 19 Dec; 2 B CBC 19 Dec; O CBC 2 Jan.

TANAGERS-WEAVERS

Chipping Sparrow: 8 Amagansett 18 Dec, 3 remained into season's end.
Vesper Sparrow: 2 Breezy Pt B CBC 19 Dec.
Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow: no confirmed reports, birds were either Saltmarsh or unidentified sharp-tailed sparrow.
Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow: all reports in winter were either of this species or unidentified sharp-tailed sparrow species.
Seaside Sparrow: SI CBC 19 Dec.
Lapland Longspur: St. Charles Cemetery in Horned Lark flock 21 Feb on.
Dickcissel: B CBC 19 Dec.
BREWER'S BLACKBIRD: feeder on Staten Island Jan 31 on (JS,HF,CH).
Boat-tailed Grackle: wintering in two locations, JBWR and Dune Rd SHIN.
Baltimore Oriole: Q CBC 19 Dec; O CBC 2 Jan.

EXOTICS

Whooper Swan: 7 ad on the main pond in CRSP certainly of escaped origin.

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